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A Qualitative Study of Gender and Work in a British Riding School

Kate Calamatta

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the department of Sociology

University of Sussex
January 2012

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEXKATE CALAMATTA, DPHIL SOCIOLOGYA QUALITATIVE STUDY OF GENDER AND WORK IN A BRITISH RIDING
SCHOOLSUMMARY

This thesis focuses on employees of the horse riding school sector within the United Kingdom. It is based on qualitative fieldwork at two riding schools that took place over the course of three years and asks two questions: why do women numerically dominate within the setting of the riding school? How can we best understand this phenomenon using sociological literature? The subject for this thesis was motivated by my own prior experience as a worker within this industry.

The thesis will position the riding school sector within theoretical understandings of gender in the workplace, and women in society more generally. It will contribute to theorising about occupational segregation by sex, and current understanding of emotional labour, especially regarding the emotion work that is carried out around non-human animals.

The riding school setting will be explored in terms of the skills that are valued by employees and the methods by which these skills are acquired. It will be demonstrated that concepts around skill provide a framework which maintains and recreates a concentration of women within the industry. Additionally, the gendered framework of the riding school will be positioned within a broader cultural understanding of the 'innate' skills of women, and the low value and status of these skills relative to those 'possessed' by men. The research will also explore the complexities of employee responses to the gendered representation of their work. The emotional labour that is undertaken in relation to non-human animals will be explicated, paying specific attention to gendered patterns displayed in this labour. Lastly, the thesis will scrutinise assumptions regarding positive emotional displays towards the horses by employees and will ask whether work with non-human animals evokes a greater sense of emotional authenticity than work with humans.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The riding school sector is one part of a diverse horse industry that exists within the United Kingdom (Lantra, 2011). In these places customers pay to spend an hour sitting on the back of a domesticated horse. They may ride in circles, learning to walk, trot, canter and, if they are feeling brave, jump. Or, if they are lucky and skilled enough on their mounts, they may venture beyond the confines of the school: riding on roads in towns, or through the fields and woods of the British countryside. For customers the horse comes ready prepared, saddled and bridled: the horse is healthy and ready to work. All that is left for the rider is to fasten their helmet and climb on board. Within the workings of the riding school, however, there resides a small army of carers and cleaners. It is their job to ensure that a customer can hold out their hand and receive the reins of a mount, and it is a job that demands both stamina, and a curious relationship with the focus of it all: the horse.

Walk into any riding school in the UK and you will witness the same routine taking place. Grooms are moving in and out of stables, forking mucky straw into wheelbarrows, brushing and tacking up horses. Instructors stand in arenas, calling out orders to novices who ride in a group around them. Customers move around the workers, collecting horses, checking riding lists, making idle chat. And everyone casually observes the movements and behaviour of those around them.

This is an environment in which I could be very comfortable, and one from which I have earned a wage. For years I was the hassled, rushed groom constantly on the move between stable, field, tack room, and hay barn. Resting, with a heavy fall, into a chair at lunchtime and eating until my strength returned. I have been trodden on, dragged, bitten, and shoved over by the charges for whose care I was responsible. I also rode; had horses run away with me, refuse to go forward, stop at jumps and (the pinnacle of enjoyment for me) gallop across pristine grass. I was

also a groom, however, who could not avert her eyes from the sociological phenomena which confronted me daily.

Walk into any riding school in the UK and, if you are a sociologist with an interest in gender studies, you will witness a repeating pattern: these environments are consistently and overwhelmingly dominated by women.

This thesis aims to ask the simple question: why? Why is it that female employees appear to outnumber male employees in riding schools? What is the level of occupational segregation by sex within the riding school sector of the horse industry within England, and how did this occupational segregation come to be produced and maintained?

In attempting to answer this question I shall be relying on a definition of gender that sets it apart from that of biological sex. Like Cockburn, I view 'gendering' as a process that actively takes place throughout one's life. As she states,

The result of the gendering process is that all behaviour becomes gendered and all interpretations of behaviour likewise (1988: 37).

Behaviour cannot, therefore, be interpreted without reference to the gendered assumptions that form that interpretation. Gender is, as Cockburn highlights, a "*part of our cultural tools for thinking, for ordering and understanding the world*" (1988: 38).

It is from this perspective that I view the occupational segregation of the workplace: the gendering of human behaviour forms the basis from which the work environment is organised, and is a cause of inequality, such as the wage gap, between men and women in western countries (Walby, 1998: 1).

Theoretical discussions around occupational segregation by sex within the horse industry are generally not participated in by those who engage directly with the industry. Through the last seven years of writing this thesis I have spoken to many people, employees, employers and hobbyists, asking why they think there exists

such a clear association between women and horses. The answer is invariably something along the lines of: *“well, women love horses, don’t they?”* A single powerful phrase which is representative of the traditional gender stereotypes still held within society, stereotypes which go especially unquestioned when discussed in terms of women and non-human animals.

The horse industry is an under-represented area of sociological research. Background research confirmed how little critical interrogation there had been of the horse industry specifically and, more broadly, gender and the field of human-animal studies. This neglect of what I view to be an important window onto gender in the workplace was the main motivation for the writing of this thesis. By doing so, I hope I can generate further interest in this area of study.

This thesis aims to contribute to three main areas of existing sociological theory: occupational segregation, emotional labour, and the field of human-animal studies. Firstly, this thesis develops current understanding of occupational segregation by applying an existing framework to an industry currently under-researched within sociology. It explores how the sex-typing of an industry, and therefore its employees, can become so rooted within the culture of that industry that even contradictory forms of behaviour (i.e. behaviour that is stereotypically associated with an alternative gender) do not impact upon either the overall segregation by sex, or the perception of the industry as sex-typed. It will also show how female individuals within a segregated workplace attempt, to some degree, to distance themselves from the sex-typing of their environment. Additionally, the thesis will confirm existing theoretical understanding regarding social assumptions about women’s responsibilities within the family, and the expectation that she will ultimately leave a career in order to become a parent.

Secondly, this thesis will apply existing theory regarding emotional labour in the workplace, to work with non-human animals. It will develop theory by demonstrating how a correct emotional display towards the horses is essential for work within this sector. The thesis will show how emotions remain closely

associated with the perceived 'innate' abilities of women, and how this serves to exclude men from the work environment. This remains the case even when the emotion displayed is not the one reportedly felt by the worker. Lastly, this thesis will develop the concept of emotional labour to include work with non-human animals demonstrating how, rather than being either emotionally authentic, or emotionally false, grooms are constantly negotiating the space in between. Theoretical understanding within the field of human-animal studies will be developed both by questioning the fallibility of the authentic 'love' individuals claim to feel towards horses, and by the use of the framework of emotional labour. This thesis will show how positive emotional responses towards non-human animals can be more closely associated with a concept of the 'natural', and how this affords it a perception of 'validity' greater than that of emotional responses towards humans.

In order to understand the meanings behind occupational segregation within the horse industry, I began by completing a literature review of relevant research, as detailed in Chapter Two. This review included theories of occupational segregation, emotional labour, and the field of human-animal studies. This chapter also details quantitative data that supports my initial observation that the industry is clearly occupationally segregated by sex.

In order to collect empirical data that would specifically unpick the meanings behind the concept of gender within the riding schools, I chose to utilise the qualitative methodology of ethnography. I carried out a total of eight months of fieldwork based at two different riding schools over a period of three years. I engaged in participant observation and extended semi-structured interviews. My research participants were mainly grooms; the low-status employees responsible for the day-to-day care of the horses. Chapter Three explores my methodology in detail.

Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven are my main data chapters, which become increasingly analytical as they progress. Chapter Four serves to introduce the

riding school environment to a person with no previous experience. It details the physical spaces and how those spaces are used, the participants within this research and their motivations for joining the industry, and the work that is carried out in the yard. It highlights the phenomenon of occupational segregation as well as laying out the groundwork for the rest of the thesis. Chapter Five asks the question: how do people get the skills required to work in the industry? It details the formal and informal methods of learning, and how these are valued by the participants. It also explores the career aspirations of the participants, relating these aspirations to qualification attainment and motivations for entering the industry. Chapter Six asks what the participants perceive to be the skills that are required to work in the horse industry. This chapter explores the physicality and skill in horse care that is required as well as analysing how interaction with humans differs from interaction with horses. Emotional labour and sex-typing is discussed at length as a key element behind women's work with horses. Chapter Seven develops the analysis of skills and methods of learning by exploring the meaning behind conflict within the riding school. This chapter details the negotiation of status, showing how specific skills requirements underpin status and, ultimately participation, within the riding schools. Lastly, Chapter Eight applies the findings from the data chapters to the three broad theoretical strands of occupational segregation, emotional labour, and the field of human-animal studies. It shall demonstrate how emotional labour is a fundamental tool to shed light on occupational segregation within the horse industry, as well as a key component in providing policy development recommendations for the industry. It shall explain, therefore, how this thesis serves to both contribute to existing sociological theory and provide clear points for development within the riding school sector.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall introduce the three broad areas of literature that will underpin my theoretical framework. Firstly, I shall explore theories of occupational segregation by sex in the workplace, outlining the historical development of women's roles and the development of occupationally segregated roles. This will lead into a detailed exploration of the concept of 'emotional labour', focusing on the work of Hochschild (1983). I shall then provide a description of the horse industry, explaining its development over the previous century. The position of women in the horse industry will be defined and explored by looking at existing research. Lastly, I will look at the broader context of the field of human-animal studies.

2 Women and Work

In spite of significant gains over the last century, women's employment patterns continue to show evidence of occupational segregation by gender (Anker, 1998; Woodfield, 2007). Research has enabled an interrogation of the meanings behind, and mechanisms that reproduce, gender inequality.

In 'Women and Work in Modern Britain', Crompton (1997) argues that there is a historical division of labour between men and women, where men have occupied the dominant position in societies. She explains how work in the seventeenth and eighteenth century was dominated by agriculture and that men, women and children all cooperated to produce basic foods and commodities. Tasks were already segregated along lines of gender, however. Women cared for the poultry, pigs, dairy and household tasks, whereas men cared for the larger non-human animals such as horses, and carried out the heavier, more physically demanding, tasks such as mowing and ploughing (Sachs, 1996; Crompton, 1997). This began to change with the development of farming practices and the move towards mass

production and, as Sachs (1996) explains, reduced the amount of work women did with non-human animals.

Tasks carried out by men and women were divided along lines of sex prior to industrialisation and capitalism, and were subject to cultural influence (Sachs, 1996). Therefore, a socially constructed concept of gender roles pre-dated capitalism and industrialisation altered, or re-defined, what was seen as 'women's work'. Additionally, we can see from the above an affirmation that women were not historically associated with horses.

Crompton (1997) explains how the process of industrialisation saw men increasingly identified with paid work outside the household. Women, however, participated in non-paid work within the household. She describes a parallel change in the ideology of the concept of womanhood. A 'good' woman was seen as refined and delicate, an 'angel of the house' who was shielded from the 'vulgarity' of public life. She argues that, although this idea was developed amongst the upper classes, which were more likely to be able to afford a non-working wife, it permeated to the other classes. At the turn of the century the prevailing ideal was for the man to earn a family wage, i.e. the sole income of the family, which would enable the woman to remain within the family and the household. For many families, however, this was not a situation that could be maintained. Many women had to work to either add to the family income, or provide for themselves. Therefore, those who could not afford to stay at home took on casual, ill-paid jobs that normally constituted practical and acceptable extensions of their tasks in the house, i.e. housework and childcare (Davidoff and Westover, 1986). Generally, paid work for women at this time, however, carried negative overtones and was seen as a slur on the ability of husbands and brothers to take care of them (Davidoff and Westover, 1986).

In her book 'Gender Transformations', Walby (1997) discusses the importance of the 'first wave' of feminism. She dates this as from around 1850 to 1930 and

states that the movement involved campaigns not only for women's suffrage, but also,

for the containment of predatory male sexual behaviour; access to employment; to training and education; reform of the legal status of married women so they could own property; for divorce and rights to legal separation at the woman's behest as well as that of the husband (1997: 149).

The women's movement at this time aimed to alter women's position in society, and obtaining equal access to employment was only one part of this. Walby explains that the unionisation of women enabled them to organise, resulting in improvements in pay and conditions. At the same time, women were gaining limited access to universities, which further increased their employment potential in previously male-dominated areas. Both the first and second world wars brought women more directly into the workplace and gave them practical experience of fulfilling the dual roles of both mother and worker (Whelehan, 1995). This 'integration' of women into men's jobs during wartime (Milkman, 1987) was contrary to previous expectations held by women and society in general. In the case of the First World War, however, women's contributions "*almost certainly contributed to their partial enfranchisement in 1918*" (Walters, 2005: 86). This entry of women into previously male dominated workplaces was, however, resisted. As Phillips and Taylor state,

One of the most celebrated episodes in the history of British class struggle – the Shop Steward's Movement of the First World War – drew its strength from the resistance of men workers to a dilution of their jobs by women (1980: 86).

The 1950s and 1960s saw further backlash and the reinforcing of the notion that the maintenance of the house and the raising of children was the ideal route for married women (Davidoff and Westover, 1986; Whelehan, 1995). Motherhood meant the abandonment of a career and a woman with both a career and family

was seen as having to juggle a work persona with a 'true' domestic one (Whelehan, 1995).

Gains were still made, however, and the 1960s witnessed a further increase of women in academia, resulting in a more systematic confrontation of the issue of women's equality. At the same time there were increases in the numbers of women in paid employment; the narrowing of the wage gap for full time workers; the closing of the gap of educational qualifications; and the development of equal opportunity legislation (Walby, 1997). The 1970s saw the passing, in the United Kingdom, of the Equal Pay Act, the Sex Discrimination Act and the establishment of the Equal Opportunities Commission. There can be little doubt, however, that the roles of men and women are "*still undergoing profound change, in the process transforming the nature of the family, society, culture and politics along with economics and the world of work*" (Loutfi, 2001: 4).

The modern day workforce does not, however, display equal participation between the sexes. As Connell states,

In almost all parts of the world, men are more likely to have a paid job. The world 'economic activity rate' for women has crept up, but is still just over two-thirds of the rate for men (2009: 3).

Women still hold a secondary position within the workforce, commanding lower incomes and, especially if they have children, remaining dependent on male partners (Connell, 2009). Women's participation, in terms of job role, is also broadly different from that of men's. Again, as Connell states,

Women are a substantial part of the paid workforce, lower down the hierarchy. They are mostly concentrated in service jobs – clerical work, call centres, cleaning, serving food, and professions connected with caring for the young and sick (2009: 2).

Women's participation in the workplace has therefore remained organised, to varying degrees, along lines of 'occupational segregation' (Woodfield, 2007).

Occupational segregation can be viewed in both vertical and horizontal terms (Crompton, 1990; Anker, 1998; Bradley, 1999). Vertical occupational segregation by sex can be defined as the situation where one sex is more likely to be in the higher status, higher paid jobs than the other. Horizontal occupational segregation by sex refers to a clustering of sexes across occupations (Anker, 1998). The labour market is segregated so that women's jobs reflect the tasks they carry out in the home, are perceived as unskilled, and are poorly paid (Giddens, 1993). An occupation can be defined as clustered when one gender comprises more than 75 percent or less than 25 percent of its participants (Woodfield, 2007). Although there have been changes in the labour market, occupational segregation by sex is still a key factor, as Anker argues,

Occupational segregation by sex is extensive and pervasive and is one of the most important and enduring aspects of labour markets around the world. This is despite the fact that there have been large increases in the labour force participation of women worldwide (1998: 3).

Anker additionally finds that male dominated occupations are more common than female dominated occupations; that male dominated occupations are associated with higher status and higher pay; and that women are restricted in their labour market choices. Although there is some mixed participation within most occupations, this is greatly restricted.

It is argued that the phenomenon of occupational segregation is closely related to the continued dominance of the concept of the male 'breadwinner'; where one family member is responsible for obtaining the majority of the family's financial resources (Anker, 1997; Grint, 2005; Warren, 2007). When men assumed the role as dominant breadwinners within the family, women assumed the role of dominant homemaker and carer, and this must be taken into account when exploring patterns of work outside of the home. As stated by Grint,

Work patterns are necessarily related to their domestic responsibilities, so that the analysis of 'work' cannot occur in isolation from the analysis of the home-work link (2005: 191).

The role a woman has outside of the home is therefore related to the work completed inside of the home. That is not to say that the modern woman does not have a role outside of the home, but that the form of her participation is moulded by the cultural expectations of her role within the home. As Philips and Taylor state,

Patriarchy intervened, and ensured through the development of the family wage system that women's subordinate position within the family be reproduced within waged labour (1980: 81).

Thus a woman's position within the home is reproduced in spite of the efforts of feminists, activists, politicians and trade unionists. This role is, still, pervasive in society and continues to have a real impact on the experiences of women (Dumais et al., 1993).

Anker argues that occupational segregation serves to maintain gender stereotypes that reproduce women's low status and refers to segregation as an explanatory factor in the pay differences between men and women. This, he argues, contributes to the levels of overall poverty and inequality in society (Anker, 1998). The link between the perceived skills requirements of an occupation and the perceived innate skills, or abilities, of women is also highlighted (Whelehan, 1995, Anker 1998). These skills linkages, between women and occupations, are frequently cited as an explanation for occupational segregation by gender in the labour market. As Bottero states,

Women are directed towards types of work stereotypically considered most appropriate to their sex – where traditionally 'feminine' qualities or a 'caring' approach is required (1992: 332).

Sociologists, however, question the existence of 'innate' abilities that can be attributed to a particular sex. As Crompton states,

Gender division in labour does not simply depend on individual tastes and preference, or some kind of 'innate' difference between men and women, but rather reflects the historical and social context in which it is developed (1997: 16).

The defining of a job as 'skilled' or 'unskilled' may therefore have more to do with the sex of the occupants than the actual required abilities of the participants. As Phillips and Taylor state,

The classification of women's jobs as unskilled and men's jobs as skilled or semi-skilled bears little relation to the actual amount of training or ability required for them. Skills definitions are saturated with sexual bias. The work of women is deemed inferior simply because it is women who do it (1980: 79).

Occupations that are considered 'women's work' are considered lower skilled occupations because they are occupied by women. This is a recognised pattern that occurs within an industry when it goes through a process that de-skills the tasks within the occupation. Again, as Phillips and Taylor state,

This pattern of development – the sexualisation of skill labels following the actual de-skilling of work processes – is one which has been repeated throughout the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (1980: 85).

Bottero also finds a similar process taking place within the setting of the pharmacy. She states,

The entry of women into pharmacy coincides with changes in the nature of employment relationships in general in the profession and can only be understood in this wider context. In particular the relationship between the range of employment opportunities and the class, education and age of pharmacists undergoes a transformation which corresponds with, but cannot be reduced to, developments in gender composition. Because of the inter-

related nature of these changes the meaning of the occupational title of 'pharmacist' itself undergoes transformation (1992: 343).

The industry therefore undergoes a development in participation requirements, which corresponds with its 'feminisation'. The entry of women into the industry is associated with the de-valuing of its status and skills. This de-valuing can also act as a shield to protect against female incursion into male dominated, 'skilled', occupations. Skill becomes "*defined against women*" and skilled work becomes "*work that women don't do*" (Phillips & Taylor, 1980: 86). The occupation then becomes 'sex-typed' (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990) and associated with one or the other gender. From this point onwards it is difficult for the segregation trend to be reversed. Once sex-typed, an occupation may remain so and labour demand may continue to be sex specific (Crompton, 1990).

Anker (1998) lists the attributes that are perceived as 'female' within the workplace. These include a caring nature; skill at household-related work; greater manual dexterity (especially smaller, nimble fingers); greater honesty; physical appearance; greater willingness to take orders; greater docility and less likelihood of complaining about work, working conditions; less likelihood of joining trade unions; greater willingness to do monotonous/repetitive work; greater willingness to accept lower wages; less need for income; greater interest in working at home; disinclination to supervise others; less physical strength; less ability with science and maths; less willing to travel; and less willing to face physical danger and use physical force (1998: 23). These qualities, he argues, structure the work engaged in by women. This leads to a concentration of women into what is perceived as 'feminine' jobs. As Badgett and Folbre state,

That women are for the most part concentrated in "feminine" jobs implies that their jobs tend to involve responsibilities for care...Most conspicuous are nursing and teaching, two subcategories of "professional, technical and related" occupations that are poorly paid, especially relative to the education they require (1999: 337).

Women's skills and characteristics are not always portrayed as so overtly passive, submissive, and altruistic. A further attribute that is often ascribed to women is their use of 'indirect aggression' as a mechanism for negotiating status and managing conflict. Although not in direct contradiction with the Anker's and Badgett and Folbre's portrayal of the perceived skills of women, it does imply a more active negotiation of status than is normally considered. Indirect aggression can be defined as a covert form of aggression which aims to damage friendships through breaking confidences, using ostracism, avoiding, ignoring or excluding newcomers (Owens, Shute and Slee, 2000). Reasons have been suggested for the association between indirect aggression and females, but two key themes appear to dominate: the higher valued placed, by females, on friendships groups, and their lesser physical ability relative to males (Owens, Shute and Slee, 2000: 20). Owens, Shute and Slee asked school aged children why they participated in this form of aggression, and found that they cited reasons such as the alleviation of boredom, to gain attention, and to help bind a friendship group. Additional reasons given by the girls included a desire to create excitement in their lives, jealousy, and as a reaction against being denied access to the boy's physical games (2000: 28-29). Bjorkqvist adds that although adolescent girls may develop a strategy of indirect aggression as a response to a physical weakness relative to boys, this choice of strategy becomes habituated and reinforced through social norms (1994: 185). The justification of physical difference is questionable, however, as girls are as capable as boys of engaging in physical aggression within the school environment. The concept of 'indirect aggression' is clearly related to the theories of occupational segregation and sex-typing, and demonstrates that gendered behavioural expectations are active prior to participation in the workplace. As Delamont states, "*schools are important agents of socialisation*" (1990: 3) adding that they serve to reinforce sex segregations and stereotypes.

One way of understanding the concept of occupational segregation by sex is to carry out research into industries that are dominated by men, asking why it is that these sectors are resistant to the employment of women. Williams (1989)

researched individuals in non-typical employment roles by looking at women working in the Marine Corps and men working in Nursing. She argues that the Marine Corps has a perceived masculine identity and Nursing has a perceived feminine identity. Each occupation, therefore, has a gendered identity which matches the supposed gendered characteristics of its employees. Williams states that both career paths are advertised in a particular way, to further foster occupational segregation. The Military is presented as a proving ground for masculinity, and Nursing is presented as good preparation for 'housewifery' and motherhood. Williams argues that this is the case for all parts of the labour market, stating that "*most jobs in our economy are thought of as either 'men's work' or 'women's work'*" (1989: 2).

Williams further finds that individuals working in occupations not traditionally associated with their gender (e.g. the man in Nursing, the woman in the Marines) are seen as either masculine women or feminine men. They are viewed as being in conflict with their traditional gender role, where men possess masculine characteristics and women possess feminine characteristics. To counter this, Williams argues that the individuals actively constructed their gender in the workplace to maintain traditional gender roles. She highlights examples of male Nurses promoting their 'strong, aggressive' qualities and female Marines promoting their 'softer', 'emotional' side. This, Williams argues, protects them from being stereotyped by others as homosexual and can result in the individual over-emphasising their gender identity. As Simpson (2004) found, an emphasis upon traditional roles is also applied by men and women to the jobs themselves. Simpson found that male flight attendants emphasised the 'masculine' safety and security elements of the job over the more 'feminine' elements of serving the customer. She also found this to be a strategy for avoiding becoming associated with homosexuality and, as she states,

Men in non-traditional occupations, irrespective of sexual orientation, experience anxiety around the powerful stigmas associated with the homosexual status (2004: 365).

Williams' research also highlights incidents of vertical segregation in both occupations. Male Nurses are promoted over female Nurses for their 'leadership' qualities and male Marines are promoted over female Marines for their 'aggressive' qualities. Williams shows how stereotypically male characteristics can be consistently valued over stereotypically female characteristics. Men, she argues, benefit from the maintenance of gender stereotyping and occupational segregation, and this is achieved by the rewarding of male characteristics in society more highly than female characteristics. Williams also argues that women are more eager to join male dominated occupations than vice versa, and that this is partly due to the higher status associated with men's jobs. Some of these findings were also uncovered by Pullen and Simpson (2009) in their study of men in nursing and primary school teaching. Pullen and Simpson found that men engage in a 'differentiation strategy' that set them apart from women, which involved,

Seeing themselves as having 'a different form of compassion', caring in a more 'detached' way, as being 'more rational' and having 'more authority' and 'more discipline' than women (2009: 570).

Simpson's earlier study also found that men in female dominated industries benefitted from four different effects: the career effect, the special consideration effect, the assumed authority effect, and the comfort zone effect (2004: 356-358). Men's careers are often fast tracked by management; they are given special consideration, for example, by being allowed to adhere to more relaxed workplace rules; they are assumed to be better at discipline and handling difficult situations; and they had positive relations with their female colleagues.

Simpson also found that men are more inclined to emphasise the more 'technical' elements of their work. This correlates with Woodfield's study (2000) which found

that differences in the experiences of men and women, within information and communications technology (ICT), are partly based on assumptions that the male staff are more technically orientated (seen as a positive skill for the occupation) than the female staff, and that all male skills are more valuable than female skills. Kelan (2009) also found that the typically 'feminine' skills of social ability and flexibility are viewed as key competencies for ICT employees (as well as the more 'masculine' technical ability). This should have led to a more feminine portrayal of the job role, but it did not and men remained dominant within the workforce she studied (Kelan, 2009).

As Kelan states,

I then looked at the dynamic at work that leads to men appearing closer to the ideal worker despite the ideal new skills often being attributed to women. This dynamic functions to construct the ideal worker as gender neutral. Yet men can claim this apparently neutral position more easily than women, because women tend to be perceived as women and not just as workers. Thus the debates around the feminisation of work are made more complex (2009: 183-184).

Women are, therefore, at a disadvantage within the workforce simply because they are women. Woodfield highlighted the socially constructed nature of skills assessments and skills selection, and its use in determining the sex of the employees (2000). Woodfield's research shows how the professionalization and codification of the computer industry, i.e. making processes more transparent to counter the problem of poor quality products, not only threatens the masculine culture that promotes technical skills, but also threatens this intangible element which facilitates a social selection of employees. Selection based on skills assessments are therefore not meritocratic but maintain the culture of the powerful and pre-existing employees, which generally favours men. Recruitment practices, both external and internal to an organisation, can use the selection of skills as a way to maintain occupational selection by sex (Crompton, 1990). Management

strategies, therefore, *“can have serious implications for the gendering of jobs”* (Mills, 1996: 90).

It is not, therefore, the innate abilities of either sex that is important in the feminisation or ‘masculinisation’ of specific job roles or even larger industries. Rather, the broad issue of occupational segregation can only be viewed within the context of gender identities, how they are constructed, and displayed within the workplace (Kelan, 2009). Certain jobs are closely associated with gender assumptions and a key technique of revealing these assumptions involves exploring the concept of the ‘ideal worker’. As Kelan states,

When we think about certain jobs, they often carry gender assumptions, and the performances required at work tend to be of a gendered nature. These gender assumptions become clear when we look at the characteristics ascribed to the ideal worker (2009: 29).

In the following section I am going to look closer at the relationship between the workplace and home-based work as a way of understanding how conceptions of gender, that mould women’s participation in the workforce, are produced and reproduced.

2.1 The ‘Second Shift’

Hochschild explored the ‘second shift’ (1989) that took place within the home when both members of a couple, with children, worked full-time. Her study is crucial to the understanding of how women’s careers and family life is negotiated and the impact it has upon both the mother in the workplace, as well as women who do not have children. The management of home-based work is highly relevant to occupational segregation by sex within the workplace.

Hochschild begins by outlining the position of women in the workforce since the 1950s. She states that the number of women in the workforce has doubled between 1950 and 2002 from 30% of American women to 60% of American women, and two-thirds of mothers work (1989: 2). This compares similarly to the

United Kingdom where the employment rate for women has risen from 53% in 1971 to 66% in 2011 and where, in 2010, 66.5% of women with dependents were employed (Spence, The Office for National Statistics, 2011).

Hochschild found that the maintenance of two full-time jobs and the care of dependents were perceived by those included in her study as a hard and demanding situation to perpetuate (1989: 2). The tasks of 'breadwinning', maintaining the home, and caring for the children become sites of negotiation, and these tasks have been found to be segregated by sex. Hochschild asked the question "*if most couples can't afford household help, how much more are fathers doing at home?*" (1989: 3) and found that men were completing far less domestic work, including childcare, than women. This extra work on the home and with children amounted to the completion, by women, of an extra month of twenty four hour days per year (1989: 4). Hochschild called this the 'second shift' (1989: 4).

This extra work was also discussed more recently by Purcell, who states that,

...women continue to bear the main burden of household responsibilities in most households; they are the primary homemakers and parents in most cases, although they receive more practical support from their partners than previous generations of wives and mothers. Evidence of increased male participation in the private sphere suggests that such increased participation is incremental rather than substantial (1996: 178).

As Hughes states, therefore, "*...it is women's responsibilities in terms of the family that appear to be the most resistant to change...*" (2002: 31).

Hochschild argues that men and women hold certain gender ideologies and that these can be either 'traditional' or 'egalitarian'. Traditional models generally place the woman within the home; therefore women who are in the workforce would also care for the home and children. The egalitarian model splits home-based work equally between both members of a couple. Hochschild highlights that belief in these models differ according to class and gender,

The working class tended toward the traditional ideal, and the middle class tended towards the egalitarian one. Men tended toward the traditional ideal, women toward the egalitarian one (1989: 196-197).

Hochschild argues that the difference in gender ideologies between men and women can be ascribed to the different position each gender holds relative to the workforce. She states,

Today, most families are in the third stage of economic development but in the second stage of fatherhood. Mothers are in the labour force, but most fathers have yet to embrace a notion of themselves as equally important as their wives at home (1989: 195).

Hochschild argues that men made the transition away from the home into a workplace at the time of industrialization. Women are now making the same transition, but they are still expected to maintain the traditional role within the home. Whilst women are moving towards the workplace, men are not moving towards the home. As Hochschild states,

The “female culture” has shifted more rapidly than the “male culture”; the image of the go-get-‘em woman has yet to be fully matched by the image of the let’s-take-care-of-the-kids-together man. More important, over the last thirty years, men’s underlying feelings about taking responsibility at home have changed much less than women’s feelings have changed about forging some kind of identity at work (1989: 214).

This has a direct impact on the position of women within the workforce. If women with families have to negotiate work and the ‘second shift’, with the responsibility of the extra month a year falling mainly to them, then their careers ultimately fall in priority. Hochschild argues,

Since her work comes second, she carries more of the second shift, thus providing backstage support for her husband’s work. Because she supports her husband’s efforts at work more than he supports hers, her personal

ambitions contract and her earnings, already lower, rise more slowly. The extra month a year she works contributes not only to her husband's success but to the expanding wage gap between them, and keeps the cycles spinning (1989: 266).

This cycle has a direct impact upon the position of women in the workplace more generally. Whilst we still live in a society that measures success in masculine terms, i.e. career success, then women who are sacrificing their career for the 'second shift' will be the losers. As Hochschild states,

The most important cost to women is not that they work the extra month a year; it is that society devalues the work of the home and sees women as inferior because they do devalued work (1989: 274).

Therefore whilst work outside the home remains the 'valued' form of work, home-based work (the cleaning, the caring, managing etc.) remains de-valued and this has a direct impact in the workplace in terms of occupational segregation by sex. Not only are jobs roles within the home recreated in the workforce, but also those 'feminine' job roles are undervalued relative to the 'masculine' job roles. As Hughes argues,

...caring about one's children or one's partner are primarily the spheres of the least powerful. Caring about these issues and those who undertake this care are, in consequence, of low value (2002: 109).

The connection between home work and the workplace has very important ramifications for gender theory and occupational segregation. Not only is the concept of gender "*multidimensional*" (Connell, 2009: 11) but occupational segregation is also multidimensional and, as stated above, cannot be explored without reference to the home (Grint, 2005). Until the gender bias within the home is fully uncovered, understood and transformed, it can be argued that occupational segregation will remain prevalent within society. Hughes states,

...this [feminist theory] has focused primarily on achieving equality based on entry into paid labour. A key problem with this is that it has left women's family responsibilities unchanged....greater access to paid employment cannot be viewed simply as a liberating phenomena that leaves women less dependent on male partners and more fulfilled as individuals. Indeed, it is evident that women either have to manage as best they can the two greedy spheres of paid work and family and/or take part-time, flexible employment with its associated lower economic and social value (2002: 34).

Women's position in the workforce is highly dependent on their position within the home. Additionally, I would argue, this has an impact upon women who have not had children: those young adults who have only recently left their own childhood home and embarked upon their own careers. These women have had their expectations set by their own parents and these expectations frame their own relationship with the workplace. In the following section I shall look at the concept of emotional labour generally and more specifically at its impact upon women's work.

3 Emotional Labour

The concept of emotional labour has developed in importance within sociology. Largely introduced by Hochschild in her book 'The Managed Heart: Commercialisation of Human Feeling' (1983), it has since become the central feature of much research regarding women and men at work.

Hochschild's theory of emotional labour relies upon much of the terminology developed by Goffman (1959) such as 'performance', 'acting', and 'team'. She states, however, that his framework is inadequate for a complete analysis of emotional labour which is a valid subject of sociological inquiry that supplements existing theories on interaction. She states that,

It is hard to use Goffman's focus to explain why some companies train flight attendants in smiling, or how emotional tone is supervised, or what profit is ultimately tied to emotional labour (1983: 10).

More recently, emotion and dramaturgical theory have been presented as more united. The actor, when engaged in a performance, is described as having to act according to different display rules which includes rules around emotional display,

with individuals trying to present themselves in ways that convince others that they are behaving in accordance with feelings and display rules as well as more general emotion ideologies (Turner & Stets, 2005: 64).

Emotion, therefore, is presented as an integral part of the display that can influence and alter the power dynamics of an encounter.

The use of emotional labour, and its associated concepts, as an explanatory mechanism to underpin this thesis was prompted by the analysis of the data itself, which displayed so many elements of Hochschild's concepts that a connection was clear. In this section, I shall outline Hochschild's framework of emotional labour. Whilst Hochschild looked at the emotion work done by flight attendants when working with human aeroplane passengers, this thesis will re-define the non-human animals as the recipients of emotional work, i.e. as equivalent to the passengers. Applying the concept of emotional labour to interactions with horses represents a new application of Hochschild's concepts¹.

Hochschild defines emotional labour as an added dimension within the workplace, similar but apart from physical or mental labour. She states,

The flight attendant does physical labour when she pushes heavy meal carts through the aisles, and she does mental work when she prepares for

¹ Personal communication with Hochschild confirms that this is also her understanding. (Email communication: 01/08/09)

and actually organises emergency landings and evacuations. But in the course of doing this physical and mental labour, she is also doing something more, something I define as emotional labour. This labour requires one to induce or suppress feeling on order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others – in this case, the sense of being cared for in a convivial and safe place (1983: 6-7).

Emotional labour, therefore, is the management of emotions so that they are expressed in a way that is correct in terms of a commercial context. This correct management of emotions in a public forum has commercial value. As Hochschild explains, a flight attendant's smile is exchanged for a wage and therefore has 'exchange value'. The flight attendant herself, however, has to also manage this emotion in a private context, which Hochschild defines as carrying out 'emotion work' that has 'use value'.

Hochschild explains that the commercial value of emotional labour is clear, stating that,

No one wants to deal with a surly waitress, a crabby bank clerk, or a flight attendant who avoids eye contact in order to avoid getting a request (1983: 9).

Hochschild splits an individual's emotional system into three different categories: emotion work, feeling rules, and social exchange.

The flight attendants in Hochschild's research do 'work' in order to manage their emotions and present the 'correct' front. She states that flight attendants are taught to 're-conceive' a difficult passenger in order to make them more acceptable, for example, the drunken passenger is re-conceived as a child. The flight attendants are trained in 'anger-desensitisation', and the importance of their smile is highlighted. Therefore, the attendants are engaged in a private form of work, manipulating their emotions in order to present the desired display.

Hochschild highlights two types of acting that are available to the individual when presenting a display. These are 'surface acting' and 'deep acting'. During surface acting, the individual acts as if their feelings correspond to their display. In deep acting, the individual's feelings are manipulated in order for them to feel the 'correct' emotion that will result in the 'correct' display. Hochschild categorises both types of acting as emotion work and states that, although deep acting is preferred, the flight attendants in her research utilise both forms.

The appropriateness of an emotional display is guided by what Hochschild calls 'feeling rules'. These work "*by establishing the sense of entitlement or obligation that governs emotional exchanges*" (1983: 56) and can generate 'misfit' or inappropriate feelings. Similar to Goffman's (1959) concept of teamwork, Hochschild states that different social groups have different feeling rules, and different ways of sanctioning and enforcing those rules.

Hochschild defines social exchange as the exchange of signs of feeling with other individuals. She highlights two types of exchange, straight and improvisational. In a straight exchange, contextual rules are used in order to make a simple gesture of recognition or an "*inward bow*" (1983: 77). In an improvisational exchange, the individual questions the contextual rules by creating irony or humour in their exchange gestures.

Hochschild also discusses the non-payment and anti-payment of a social exchange. In an incident of non-payment, the individual refuses to display the 'correct' response according to the contextual rules. In an incident of anti-payment, the individual presents a contrary response as a display of defiance.

Social exchanges are also guided by the status of the individuals involved. Hochschild explains that those of a higher status can command more and larger emotional or social exchanges from those of a lower status.

3.1 Transmutation

Hochschild uses the term 'transmutation of an emotional system' to refer to the process by which an individual's private emotional labour becomes under the control of commercial interests. Flight attendants that have experienced a transmutation of their emotional system (consisting of emotion work, feeling rules and social exchange) are able to generate a correct presentation of their emotions in their workplace. Their emotion work has become a public act, directed and trained into the individual by others, feeling rules defined in training manuals and social exchange is restricted to limited acts within a limited environment.

A failed transmutation can occur when *"the worker [becomes] estranged or alienated from an aspect of self – either the body or the margins of the soul – that is used to do the work"* (1983: 7). For Hochschild's flight attendants, an estrangement from their own emotions is demonstrative of a failed transmutation. She states that this has begun to occur in some airlines as the industry has seen a 'speed-up', which results in workers switching from 'deep acting' to 'surface acting', as Hochschild states,

When a speed-up of the human assembly line makes 'genuine' personal service harder to deliver, the worker may withdraw emotional labour and offer instead a thin crust of display (1983: 21).

When a worker only pretends to put their emotions into the job and does not concern themselves with being 'caught out' in a disingenuous display the result can be a dislocation between the interpretations of the 'real self' and the display made in public.

Hochschild explains that there are three ways an individual can manage their emotions in the workplace. Firstly, they can risk burnout by becoming closely identified with the role they take in their job. Secondly, they can distinguish their 'true self' from that which they display in the workplace; this can result in becoming remote or detached from emotions. Lastly, individuals can separate themselves

from the job, but accept that a certain amount of acting is needed, which can result in a level of estrangement and cynicism.

Hochschild also highlights the high regard that is held for 'natural' or 'spontaneous' feeling. She states,

The value placed on authentic or "natural" feeling has increased dramatically with the full emergence of its opposite – the managed heart (1983: 190).

Authentic feeling is treated as if it was precious and scarce, and this could be a reaction to the commercialization of feelings.

3.2 Gender

Hochschild highlights the position of women, arguing that *"...of all women working, roughly one-half have jobs that call for emotional labour"* (Hochschild, 1983: 11). She explains that, as women in general are of lower status to men, with less access to money, power or authority, they occupy a subordinate social position. Emotion, therefore, becomes a resource, offered in exchange for material resources. Women, she adds, receive different emotional training in childhood to men, and are taught to use their emotions as a commodity for exchange. She states,

one of the various ways of repaying their debt is to do extra emotion work – especially emotion work that affirms, enhances, and celebrates the well-being and status of others... acting is the needed art, and emotion work is the tool...yet these skills have long been mislabelled "natural" a part of a woman's "being" rather than something of her own making (1983: 165-167).

As also highlighted in the previous section on occupational segregation, specific skills focusing on 'caring' and 'mothering' become associated with women and these skills become attached to certain job descriptions.

Hochschild discusses the 'doctrine of feelings' which correlates an individual's status with the amount of value placed in their emotions and feelings by others. Due to women's subordinate status, Hochschild argued that they lacked a 'status shield'. She explains that the passengers gave less respect to female flight attendants than their male counterparts and assumed that the male attendants had a higher position of authority. In addition, women are assumed to have a higher tolerance for abuse, whereas the female flight attendants had a higher exposure to it and lack of appropriate respect from the passengers in order to deal with it. Often Hochschild's female flight attendants had to defer to their male counterparts in order to deal with difficult customers. This resulted in,

[An] increased...amount of deference that male workers felt their female co-workers owed them, and women found it harder to supervise junior males than females (1983: 179).

Women's emotions are actively managed in public contact jobs, which they dominate due to their association with the appropriate emotional and caring skills, are accorded less weight than men's as a consequence of their low status. As Hochschild states,

Much more often than men, they become the complaint department, the ones to whom dissatisfaction is fearlessly expressed. Their own feelings tend to be treated as less important (1983: 181).

The men and women in Hochschild's research have different priorities. The man, as she states, must "*maintain his identity as a man in a 'woman's occupation' and occasionally to cope with tough passengers "for" female flight attendants*" (1983: 171). For the women "*the principle hidden task is to deal with the status effect: the absence of a social shield against the displaced anger and frustration of passengers*" (1983: 171-172).

Since Hochschild's book, research into emotional labour has become a greater area of focus within sociology (Bottero, 1992; Bendelow and Williams, 1998; Black

and Sharma, 2001; Layder, 2004; Bolton, 2005; Turner and Stets, 2005). As Black & Sharma state,

It is hoped that sociologists will continue to give their attention to the role and implications of emotional work in the labour process and to extend this kind of analysis to occupations where this emotional work is least explicitly recognized (2001: 930).

Two main areas of criticism have been levelled at Hochschild's theory of emotional labour. Firstly, it is argued that she neglects to take into account the interplay between emotion and biology. Turner and Stets argue that sociologists tend to think of emotions as socially constructed and do not, therefore, highlight the biological link. They state,

Emotions are generated by a complex interplay between the neocortex, where language and culture reside, and older subcortical regions of the brain, where emotions are ultimately generated (2005: 7).

Further criticism of Hochschild's approach focuses on the reductionist way in which she presents the individuals that are performing the emotional labour. As Bolton and Boyd state,

Hochschild's concern with management attempts to seduce employees into 'loving' the company, its product and its customers, creates an illustration of emotionally crippled actors (2003: 290).

Hochschild is portrayed as presenting the flight attendants as passive actors that are being manipulated into carrying out emotion work in order to engage in emotional labour against their 'will'. She is accused of neglecting to uncover any conflict that may occur between the employees and organisations or any potential struggle over the control of emotions (Bolton, 2005). Additionally, Bolton argues that Hochschild's analysis implies a degree of normative control by the company, which allows "organisation actors' emotions [to be] captured and irretrievably damaged in the velvet cage of corporate culturism" (2005: 2). Contrary to this

conclusion, Bolton argues that not all emotions are controlled by the company, but instead *“employees are social beings who enter an organisation with life histories and certain ways of being”* (2005: 2).

The individual is, therefore, a purposive agent, highly skilled in the negotiation of the ‘feeling rules’ that exist within different environments and situations (Bolton & Boyd, 2003; Bolton, 2005). Although they do ‘work’ on their emotions, they do not always do so simply to achieve the goals of the company (Bolton, 2005). Bolton gives further depth to this understanding, stating that,

The divide between the public and the private is never clear-cut and friendships are formed and different ‘emotional zones’ are created within the workplace. It is well documented that work can be both a source of sadness and alienation, as well as engagement and humour (2005: 64).

Commercial rules and expectations are not the only ones that define and guide the emotional labour that is carried out by the flight attendants. Rather than being seen as a simplified commercially orientated concept, emotional labour should therefore be viewed more as a *“social act and a human relationship.”* (Bolton & Maeve, 2005: 686)

This perspective is summed up well by Bendelow and Williams, who state that,

Emotions are complex, multi-faceted, phenomena which are irreducible to any one domain or discourse. Emotions, in other words, are thinking, moving, feeling ‘complexes’ which, sociologically speaking, are relational in nature and linked to ‘circuits of selfhood’; comprising both corporeal, embodied aspects, as well as socio-cultural ones (1998: 124).

Emotions, therefore, cannot be analysed from the perspective of one single framework, without taking into account issues of physicality, embodiment and the relationship between these elements. This analysis has two further implications. Firstly, re-establishing the ‘personal’ in emotional labour allows a closer assessment of the motivations of the individuals who work in environments that call

for emotional labour. Not all who engage in this kind of work can be perceived as being dissatisfied, and exploited by a commercial system. As Black and Sharma found, “*on the whole, they [beauty therapists] claimed to derive much satisfaction from their emotion work*” (2001: 292). The individual that carries out emotion work, therefore, may enjoy their interactions, and participate in their job for altruistic reasons. Additionally, as Layder (2004) states, a closer interrogation of the individual may raise questions regarding the broader concept of authenticity of behaviour and the concept of ‘self’.

Secondly, the criticisms raised regarding Hochschild’s theory of emotional labour are crucial in developing the field of emotion research. This, rather than undermining Hochschild’s original framework, instead highlights the central role that research on emotions can take in the understanding of human interaction. As Bendelow and Williams state,

...emotions lie at the juncture of a number of fundamental dualisms in western thought such as mind/body, nature/culture, public/private. A major strength of the study of emotion lies, therefore in its ability to transcend many of these former dichotomous ways of thinking, which serve to limit social thought and scientific investigation in unnecessary, self-perpetuating ways (1998: xiii).

The study of emotions, therefore, has the potential to have a transformative effect on the study of sociology as a whole.

3.3 Emotional Labour and Nursing

A further area of importance when exploring the concept of emotional labour focuses on research carried out within the nursing industry. This area of research also generates policy implications that can be applied to the horse industry. The following section will outline some of the ways in which nurses’ emotional labour has been framed.

Pam Smith, in her book 'The Emotional Labour of Nursing' (1992), details the emotion work that is expected of, and carried out by, student nurses. The 'ideal' nurse was perceived as being skilled at *"Talking, listening, showing interest and sympathy"* (1992: 16). From the previous section on occupational segregation, one can understand the relevance of this conception in terms of gender. Smith highlights that *"in general, caring relationships are those involving and defining women in both the public and private domain"* (1992: 6). Smith explains that the emotional state of the nurses was something that they had to 'work' on, and was therefore a 'skill'. She states,

Nurses have to work emotionally on themselves in order to appear to care, irrespective of how they personally feel about themselves, individual patients, their conditions or circumstances (1992: 136).

This understanding of emotion work as a skill as opposed to a 'natural' quality leads Smith to argue that formal and systematic training is required to train nurses to manage the complexities of emotional labour (1992: 138). She states that this will serve to make the emotion work, carried out by nurses, more visible and therefore more valued, as opposed to being viewed as simply a facet of 'women's work' (1992: 138). Additionally, Smith argues that students should be guided to a mentor who would enable them to *"recognize and undertake emotional labour in a positive way"* (1992: 142-3).

Nicky James carried out her research within the hospice environment. She uses the formula "care = organisation + physical labour + emotional labour" (1992: 488) to define the different components of the 'carework' that she observed. James differentiates between domestic care and workplace health care, defining domestic care as,

Characteristically 'women's work', unpaid, but usually in addition to paid work, and based in the home where it becomes a 24-hour, 'on-call' responsibility (1992: 490).

Additionally, she states that within domestic care, the carer and the cared for are familiar with each other, and that there is a high degree of flexibility in the timing of the caring tasks. James (1992) differentiates organisational care from domestic care by describing it as focusing on illness and treatment, and having an organised division of labour. The process of organisational care also utilises specialised tools and specialised buildings, or spaces, where tasks are carried out (1992: 491). Additionally, James argues that domestic and organisational care differs with regards to the expectations of the participants. Domestic carers have close personal relationships, with shared cultural meanings: the caring relationship is both familiar and flexible. Organisational care, however, is structured by status relationships and guided by the cultural backgrounds of the workers. As James states,

The most significant differences between health service and domestic emotional labour are that health service staff and patients and relatives cannot assume a shared culture of shared expectations; familiarity has to have time to grow; unequal status and power may obstruct closeness; but perhaps most important of all, the sheer numbers of staff involved in shiftwork covering 24 hours/day, seven days/week for twenty patients and their relatives and friends mitigates against a sense of continuity (1992: 503).

James defines the physical labour as the tasks carried out by the nurses that enable the daily living requirements for patients: food, hygiene, activity, rest, and treatment when required. She argues that this is referred to by the nurses as their 'work' and it forms the basis for a daily timetable that is very limited in terms of flexibility. James states,

At the hospice, an additional force behind physical labour was that, at one level, nurses relied on the common-sense understanding of 'work', paid work, as physical labour or 'doing' something (1992: 498).

This representation of task focused physical labour as 'work' served to undermine the value of both the nurses' occupational role and the emotional labour they carried out.

James explains that emotional labour occurs when the nurses are expected to give care to a patient, and respond to them, in a way that is personal to them both (1992: 500). It is not an unstructured 'giving of care', however, but rather it is guided by the relative roles of nurse and patient. Additionally, the ability to deliver care is differentiated within the organisation itself. As James states,

At the hospice, at the time of the study there was almost an inverse law of status and skill in emotional labour. The temporary medical director explained that he was 'no good at that kind of thing' (i.e. disclosure), and the better-paid, higher status, but young staff-nurses relied on the four older auxiliaries who were described as being the 'backbone' of the unit (1992: 503).

This 'inverse law' demonstrates the relationship between emotional labour and its value as a skill. As both Smith and James recognise, emotional labour is perceived as 'part of the package', carried out by those who have the time to build relationships. The perceived 'work' of the departments focuses on the tasks that are both physical and have, as their focus, the treatment of an illness. Theodosius (1998) demonstrates that emotional labour is not only restricted to isolated acts of 'giving care' but actually permeates all elements of a nurse's job.

Theodosius (1998) highlights three forms of emotional labour: therapeutic emotional labour (TEL), instrumental emotional labour (IEL) and collegial emotional labour (CEL). Theodosius explains that TEL occurs,

Where the nursing intention is to enable to the establishment or maintenance of the interpersonal therapeutic relationship between nurse and patient in a way that facilitates their movement towards independent healthy living (1998: 147).

Like James, Theodosius highlights the relative status positions of a therapeutic care relationship and states that,

Emotional labour in nursing is needed by patients because they are vulnerable; which implicates it in mediating power and trust between the nurse and the patient (1998: 154).

Although TEL is generally carried out by others within the organisation, such as counsellors and psychotherapists, Theodosius explains that the role of listening to patients' concerns and providing a safe environment in which these can be aired is an important part of the nurse's provision of care (1998: 145).

Theodosius defines IEL (instrumental emotional labour) as the emotion management that is done in order to carry out medical interventions or procedures. She states that,

Its purpose is to successfully facilitate the clinical nursing procedure in a way that minimises pain and discomfort and maximises the healing process of the patient's physical body (1998: 161-162).

In other words, IEL is the emotional labour that the nurse carries out in order to calm and relax the patient. The relaxation of the patient is important to enable medical procedures to take place. Theodosius quotes a nurse as stating,

...you can't do your job if you're fingers and thumbs and you don't know what you are doing. So you have to have a certain amount of control over what you're doing yourself, and I think that is a part of the art of it, really, the art of what we do (1998: 164).

Personal physical and emotional control, therefore, has a direct impact on the emotional state of the patient, facilitating the effective completion of medical tasks. Even trainee nurses have to engage in this somewhat complex form of emotional labour. As Theodosius states,

Kate [a nurse] needs to find a way to carry out this procedure without the patient knowing that she has never done it before, because the patient needs to have confidence in his nurse (1998: 164).

These 'new' task-related skills are bound up in the management of both the nurse's own emotions and that of the patient. As with therapeutic emotional labour, IEL is also structured according to relative status between the nurse and the patient. This aids in the development of the relationship between the two. As Theodosius states,

Growth in the relationship between the nurse and the patient also occurs. This is because, as in TEL, the processes involved in IEL are informed by feeling rules. The patient is predisposed to trust the nurse's clinical knowledge and expertise, and in their understanding that having a thick latex tube inserted into your mouth, down your throat and into your stomach is not a pleasant experience (1998: 167).

Theodosius highlights that training for IEL is taught to the nurses as part of their training for the carrying out of medical procedures.

Collegial emotional labour (CEL), as defined by Theodosius, relates to the intra-organisational relationships between nurses and within multidisciplinary teams (1998: 178). Whereas TEL and IEL are guided by patient and nurse relationships, CEL is, as Theodosius states,

More fluid because status between health care professionals is less defined and fluctuates. It can be used therefore as a status marker. Because of this, sometimes the person with a lower status has to manage their emotions while those with a higher one are free to express theirs (1998: 182).

This is clearly similar to Hochschild's 'doctrine of feelings' (1983) which argues that the emotions of those of higher status are valued more than those of lower status. Theodosius highlights three pertinent elements of emotional labour. She states

firstly that self-reflection and the opportunity to express those emotions which are normally suppressed is essential. Also that emotional labour is a developing and ongoing process, as opposed to a specific and static process. Lastly and, Theodosius states, more importantly that,

Negative emotions are not 'bad' emotions, or representative of an 'inauthentic' self. Rather, they can give an important insight into the self. Accepting these elements creates a position from which to challenge the circumstances in which emotional labour arises. Doing so, however, requires the acknowledgement that nurses are not perfect or equipped with the right emotional responses. Like their clinical skills, their emotional skills need to develop over time (1998: 197).

In terms of the future of nursing care, Theodosius recommends that there be acknowledgement that nursing is a collaborative partnership between patient and nurse, where they work together to develop a relationship (1998: 218). Secondly, that TEL needs to be actively reintegrated into general nursing care, taught and monitored in the same way that IEL is (1998: 218). Lastly, Theodosius argues that there needs to be the understanding that emotional labour is integrally linked to, and underpinned by, personal identity.

From the above section one can see how Hochschild's original definition of emotional labour has been developed and, to a certain extent, transformed. The individual has been centralised within the act of emotional labour and, through research within nursing, emotional labour has been shown to permeate many elements of workplace tasks. Emotional labour has been demonstrated to be inextricable linked to gender and perceived largely as part of the 'female package'. These 'understandings' of emotional labour shall be applied, within this thesis, to the work of the grooms within the riding school sector, contributing to the broader theoretical framework. I will, however, still rely on Hochschild's own definition of emotional labour, as she specified more recently,

An act of emotion management, as I use this term, is an effort by any means, conscious or not, to changes one's feeling or emotion. We can try to induce feelings that we don't at first feel, or to suppress feeling that we do. We can – and continually do – try to shape and reshape our feelings to fit our inner cultural guidelines. These acts of emotion management sometimes succeed; often they are hopeless (1998: 9).

This section has outlined the position of women the labour market historically and defined the key concepts of vertical and horizontal occupational segregation. Further to this, I have looked at some of the meaning and mechanisms behind occupational segregation by sex, including gender identity, sex-typing and skills assessments. This section frames my understanding of the issue of occupational segregation by sex in the horse industry and will be used to guide my research. It enables me to ask whether occupations within the horse industry are perceived as gendered, whether the individuals in those occupations portray gendered characteristics and whether these individual gendered characteristics are perceived as suitable for the occupation and individual in question. I have highlighted the role of skill and skills assessments and explored the concept of the 'second shift' and its impact on women's role in the labour market. Lastly, I have explored the concept of emotional labour and seen how it has been practically applied to understandings of the workplace.

4 The Horse Industry and the Field of Human-Animal Studies

The horse industry is under-researched within sociology. The British Sociological Association (BSA) and American Sociological Association (ASA) both incorporate non-human animals and society study groups, with limited (but growing) memberships, who write from a variety of perspectives. The BSA and ASA both recognise the need for sociological analysis to be applied to the relationship between humans and non-human animals and the social construction of non-

human animals in modern society². Research that focuses on the horse and the horse industry can be viewed as a subset of the field of human-animal studies (HAS). This is a constantly developing environment, however, and the formation of groups such as the Equine Research Network (EqRN)³ will help to raise the profile of the horse as part of the overall field of human-animal studies. The EqRN, established in 2009, is the only international network to bring together social scientists focused on researching within human-horse relations and the horse industry. Membership of the EqRN stands at approximately 100 people, who represent a range of university departments including sociology.

In this section I shall explore two thematic areas. Firstly, I shall look specifically at the horse industry, detailing known levels of occupational segregation by sex and existing research that has focused on horses alone. Secondly, I am going to explore the broader area of the field of human-animal studies, outlining the current understanding of the position of non-human animals within academic research.

4.1 The Horse Industry

In this section, I shall look briefly at the historical role of women in the horse industry as well as the industry's development over time. I shall then explore its current levels of occupational segregation by gender. Lastly, I shall look at the work of Cassidy (2002, 2007), along with a number of other pertinent pieces of research that focus on this industry.

The horse is a non-human animal that has been the subject of radical repositioning within the last century. Their 'fall from grace' as a commercial asset, used widely throughout the period of industrialization, has also seen a radical change in the gender of those who work with them.

Women did not always dominate the horse industry and historical accounts do not relate women closely with horses. Leyser (1995) in her study of medieval women

² <http://www2.asanet.org/sectionanimals/Why.html> and <http://www.ahsg.co.uk/>

³ www.EqRN.net

argues that in Anglo-Saxon England, the horse was a high status non-human animal and was only found in male graves. Women were kept away from horses and were denied access to opportunities to learn the skills needed to work with them (Richardson, 1998). This restricted access enabled men to maintain control of the handling of the horse but did not mean that women were not allowed to ride. Although women were able to ride in limited circumstances (Carr, 1976; Richardson, 1998; Hyland, 1999), they did not engage in breaking and training (Richardson, 1998), gelding and stallion work (Hyland, 1999), farming (Bradley, 1989; Caunce, 1991) or riding in war (Cooper, 1965; Roberts 1997). Men dominated these areas.

Industrialisation and mechanisation altered the position of the horse in British society. The end of the nineteenth century saw an increase in the numbers of horses used in transport and farming due to an increase in trade and developments in road, transport, and farming technologies (Barker & Savage, 1974; Freeman, 1988; Caunce 1991; Roberts, 1997). Industrialisation, however, meant that the horse was withdrawn from use in transport and replaced by the motorcar in the 1920s (Freeman, 1988); withdrawn from use on farms in the 1930s and replaced by combine harvesters (Roberts, 1997); and withdrawn from the military in the 1940s and replaced with military vehicles (Cooper, 1965). What remained were hunting, sport and leisure riding.

Data on the modern horse industry as a leisure industry is limited and it is, therefore, difficult to accurately ascertain its size and scope (The Henley Centre, 2004). These difficulties are due to the level of multi-activity within the industry. In other words, individuals engaging in one horse sport may also engage in a number of different horse-related activities. Despite this problem, it is estimated that the gross output of the entire horse industry is £3.4 billion (The Henley Centre, 2004).

Lantra, a publically financed Sector Skills Council for the environmental and land-based sectors, carried out extensive research on the horse industry, published in 2011. They mapped the industry according to the United Kingdom's 2007

Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes. Their definition of the horse industry, which shall be used as the basis for this thesis, includes livery yards, competition yards, horse trainers, riding and racing schools. Lantra found that the UK horse industry comprises of approximately 19,000 businesses. They did highlight, however, that this was probably an under-estimate of the true size of the industry, due to the likelihood that some small businesses operated unofficially and would not be identified by official sources of data. Of these known businesses, the majority are based in England, and regionally within the south east of England. Lantra asked the businesses to specify their principle activity and found that the majority of businesses are focused on trading as riding schools (38%). Other business focuses are livery yards (26%); training competition yards (9%); welfare (6%); breeding/stud (6%); producing (5%); trekking (4%); breaking/schooling (2%); horse sales (1%); and other (4%) (Lantra, 2011). Again, Lantra highlighted that due to the diversity of the horse industry, many businesses could be operating across different sub-sectors. The majority of horse businesses, Lantra found, are micro-businesses (85%), i.e. they employed fewer than ten people.

Lantra estimates that 41,220 people are directly employed in the horse industry (2011). To give that figure context, only 12,729 fishers are working in the UK fishing industry (UK Sea Fisheries Statistics, National Statistics and Defra, 2007). Lantra found that employees within the horse industry are generally young, with 57% aged between 16 and 34 compared to only 30% in the land based and environmental industries sector (2011). The employees are engaged in predominately full-time employment (67%) and identify themselves as having a white ethnic background (94%) (Lantra, 2011).

From the data available, it is clear that the horse industry in the UK is an employment environment where women are over-represented and Lantra (2011) estimates that 70% of the workforce is female. Of the currently 2157 registered riding instructors (British Horse Society, 2004), 1970 (91%) are female, 175 (8%)

are male and 12 (less than 1%) are of unknown gender. The following tables summarise British Horse Society data⁴:

Examination Entries (%)	Male	Female
BHS Stage 1	7	93
BHS Stage 2	7	93
BHS Stage 3	9	91
BHS Stage 4	11	89
Preliminary Teaching Test	9	91
Intermediate Teaching Test	12	88

Table one: Percentage of examination entrants by gender (2007-2008)

Qualified Instructors (%)	Male	Female
BHS Assistant Instructors	7	93
BHS Intermediate Instructors	10	90
BHS Instructor	19	81

Table two: Percentage of instructors by gender (2007-2008)

BHS Members (%)	Male	Female	Unknown
	13	86.5	0.5

Table three: Percentage of BHS membership by gender (2007-2008)

From the above, one can clearly see that the horse industry, in these areas specified, is overwhelmingly dominated by women. One can also see that the percentage of men marginally increases at the higher status levels of both the qualification and instructor systems. This lends credence to the notion that the horse industry, and in this case the riding school sector, could be vertically

⁴ Table data obtained as a result of my enquiries to the British Horse Society. Data from 2007-2008.

segregated by gender, although the increase in men at the higher levels is only slight. Unlike other parts of the horse industry, such as the racing industry (Cassidy, 2002), the riding school sector remains dominated by women at the upper levels. This more subtle vertical segregation is highlighted by Nusser (2004), who states that at the professional level of competitive horse sports representation of women is low relative to the numbers of younger girls who compete at youth levels. Currently, of all the members of 'Team GBR' (the British Equestrian Olympic team, encapsulating Dressage, Show Jumping, Eventing and Para-Equestrian Dressage) ten are men and ten are women⁵. This is a very equal segregation considering the overwhelming dominance of women in the riding school sector, which also demonstrates that the proportion of male participants rises at the higher professional levels.

Unfortunately, these sources do not explore the reasons behind, and the meanings attached to, occupational segregation by sex within the riding school sector. In the following section, I shall outline the research in this area that has guided my own data analysis.

For her book 'The Sport of Kings: Kinship, Class and Thoroughbred Breeding in Newmarket' (2002) Cassidy carried out her fieldwork in Newmarket, UK. Her fieldwork moved through four main phases as she based herself at a stud, training yard, the racecourse and sales ring. In terms of gender, Cassidy (2002) discusses vertical segregation. She explains that the highest concentration of women in racing is amongst 'lads' (an equivalent to a groom in the riding school sector), which is the lowest status and lowest paid job. She states that the role of lad is dominated by women and adds that the small numbers of women who succeed in the higher status roles of racing are usually from a higher external status, or class. Cassidy states, "*racing is controlled by men, and this situation is self-perpetuating*" (2002: 35).

⁵ <http://www.equestrianteamgbr.co.uk/index.php>

This self-perpetuation occurs in a number of ways. Firstly, Cassidy argues that successful women are labelled, by men, as 'brash' and 'unfeminine'. Women, according to Cassidy, are perceived as being weaker and less able to cope with a strong horse than are men. This, she argues, is used as justification for excluding women from the higher status roles of jockey and stallion handler. Women, therefore, are perceived as not having specific 'masculine' skills. Secondly, Cassidy highlights the example of a trainer who preferred to use female lads as he felt they *"really care about the horses and do a good job"* (2002: 37). Women are, therefore, ascribed feminine 'caring' characteristics, which make them more suitable for the role of lad. Thirdly, Cassidy points to a tendency for recruiters to employ those of the same gender as themselves. She refers to a bloodstock agent's comment that he would prefer to employ men because they would have to interact mainly with men. The implicit assumption here is that a woman would not be able to communicate with a man as effectively as another man would, and vice versa. There is evidence of, therefore, an active clustering of employees by sex. Fourthly, Cassidy highlights the processes of skills acquisition for the role of 'lad', explaining that a process of 'legitimate peripheral participation' occurs. She states that,

learning takes place without any obvious corresponding practice of teaching...the lack of teaching is partly due to the structural position of the newcomer; however it is justified by an appeal to the idea of 'the natural' (2002: 117-118).

The desire to be in racing, according to Cassidy's research, was seen as existing 'in the blood', and ability as 'natural talent'. This appeal to the natural partly justifies a lack of formalized teaching. Cassidy also highlights that some trainers do not like the formalised training of the British Racing School, and dispute that *"the trade cannot be taught 'at a desk'"* (2002: 118). In sum, Cassidy states,

The structural disadvantage of the newcomer to racing is justified by imagining knowledge as hereditary, a natural potential waiting to be realised

through performance....the reproduction of the hierarchy within racing may constitute an alternative explanation to the absence of overt tuition (2002: 121).

Occupational segregation, within this context, is therefore additionally perpetuated by the ascription of conceptions of gender to the 'natural'. These findings were reproduced in Cassidy's second book 'Horse People: Thoroughbred Culture in Lexington and Newmarket' (2007). She found that, in the United States "*although there is little or no formal education, learning takes place by imitation and through participation*" (2007: 124). Behaviour on the yard, inherently gendered, can be therefore viewed as 'learned' through observation.

It is this observational method of learning that appears to enable participants to learn what Cassidy refers to as the specific language or lexicon that serves to distinguish between the 'insiders' and 'outsiders' to the industry. She highlights an example of this in the area of breeding where, she states, actual proficiency in breeding is replaced with proficiency in the language associated with a proficiency in breeding (2002). This finding is replicated in Nusser's text about a competition yard in the United States. Nusser found that,

Among themselves, [the competition team, including the grooms] speak a secret language, one that separates the hangers-on from those whose talent, work ethic, and professionalism have initiated them into the team (2004: 119).

Nusser specifies the language as being acquired through 'talent, work ethic, and professionalism', but does not specify what this means or how one achieves this standard.

Occupational segregation in the racing industry can therefore be interpreted as being maintained and reproduced in the follow ways. Firstly, women are generally not ascribed masculine characteristics; this prevents them from moving to higher status roles. Those who are perceived as having masculine characteristics are

viewed negatively. Secondly, women are perceived as having feminine characteristics and a lower value attached to the work they undertake. Thirdly, there exists a clustering effect that ensures both men and women remain in roles alongside those of the same gender. Fourthly, the idea of the 'natural' is invoked to both justify gender stereotypes and to enforce an acquisition of skills that relies on observation and reproduction. Lastly, the above concepts are reproduced through a site specific language that is learnt by participants that enables them to differentiate the 'insiders' from the 'outsiders'.

Elements of the above processes can be clearly observed in Slaughter's book 'The Woman Equestrian' (2003). Slaughter writes about the relationship between women and horses from a non-academic perspective. The book reflects Cassidy's observation that skill with horses is perceived as being acquired through 'doing' rather than 'book learning', and women are ascribed 'natural' characteristics that frame their own participation. Slaughter states that,

I possess a working knowledge of the sport and of the issues that are unique to women. Bouncing a small child on one hip and a basket of folded clothes on the other cannot be learned in a day; it requires practice, as does riding. The art of juggling a job, family, and friends whilst attending to your own needs demands determination, as does riding. Careful attention to the balancing of your diet, your emotions, and your time requires intense focus, as does riding (2003: v).

Slaughter argues that involvement with horses is inherently bound up with notions of the 'female' and, more specifically 'motherhood'. 'Attending to their own needs', by participating in riding, is comparable in importance as other more 'female appropriate' activities such as multi-tasking, attending to other's needs, balancing ones diet, and the controlling of one's emotions. Slaughter confronts the more 'masculine' elements of riding and competing horses by stating that,

Children, especially girls, are constantly told to shed their passive skin and stand up for themselves. This is not necessarily bad advice, but you will

quickly lose every friend you have if you do not learn to temper your aggression a bit. It is one thing to be assertive; it is then again another to simply be rude and ill-mannered (2003: 37).

Girls, therefore, should compete, but should not become 'rude and ill-mannered', characteristics which Slaughter equates to being 'assertive' or 'aggressive'. These are, as highlighted in the first section of this chapter, characteristics stereotypically associated with males and are presented as negative by Slaughter. Slaughter is encouraging women, in part, to dampen down their competitive desires. This could help to explain why men are vertically segregated towards the higher levels of competition, whilst women are clustered towards to lower levels such as hobby rider or groom.

The inherent contradiction that confronts Slaughter's analysis is that women actually want to ride and compete. These more 'masculine desires' are negated by Slaughter as she ultimately gives motivation an emotional basis. She states,

You become a winner the moment you listened to your heart and gathered up the reins of your first mount (2003: 37).

Emotion is here presented as a key element of the perception of an individual's work with horses. Women do not compete because they desire to win, a stereotypically masculine characteristic, but they do want to be involved in horses because of the emotions of their 'heart'. The emotional element of being around horses is a multi-faceted issue, and one which I shall be developing through the course of this thesis. Emotions are presented as being felt by the individuals. As Nusser (2004) states,

For Sam [a groom], whose earliest memories are of "watching, just watching my tiny little Shetland pony", that's the whole point of her job. "That's why I came here. To learn more, to increase my love of the horses". Sam is no more able to articulate why she loves her horses than most people are able to articulate why they love their children. It is as if her purpose here on

earth is to love horses, a purpose that is so obvious it's inexplicable (2004: 20).

The 'love' felt for the horse is presented as not only being as inherently 'inexplicable' as the love a person feels for their child, but also almost as a motivation for existence. Emotions are not just presented as something the human feels, however, but also something that is felt by the non-human animal: the horse. Nusser (2004) states,

Mornings, she [the groom] says, are when the horses "love you best. You're bringing them the things they like": hay, grain, fresh water, a turn in their paddock, a clean stall, and the company of their best friend – their groom (2004: 6).

The horse is a central element in the emotional relationship: not simply perceived as an object, but rather as an interactive participant. Horses are not, therefore, exempt from the human cultural world and should not be deactivated as subjects of sociological enquiry. The depth of their participation is demonstrated by Conley (2002) who states that,

Studs [stallions used for breeding] make money and mares make babies. This unjust division of labour is hardly restricted to horses, but the retro quality of its sexual politics – the Neanderthal truth of it all – is offset by the fact that, in this case, the babies are for sale. Motherhood, too, has monetary value (2002: 89).

Conley describes a power relationship between the male stud horse and the mare which is comparable to the power relationships between male and female humans. Whether it can be considered as anthropomorphism or not, it is undeniable that the horse plays a role as an agent in the social interaction of a site. In the following section, I shall explore the ideas around the relationship between humans and non-human animals more fully.

4.2 The Field of Human-Animal Studies

The field of human-animal studies (HAS) is a very diverse and cross-disciplinary area. Within the social sciences Demello (2010) identifies six distinct syllabi that can be taught as part of HAS: anthropology, geography, law, psychology, social work, and sociology. Of course, the study of non-human animals can also cross into non-social science subjects such as history, biology, ethology, zoology etc., and all these other subjects would benefit from the insights of HAS courses. Overall, interest in the field of human-animal studies has dramatically increased over the last seven years. As Demello states,

There are now more courses offered at more colleges and universities than ever before, more conferences devoted to HAS, more college programs, institutes, journals, listserves, veterinary programs, legal centers, and organizations. Clearly, interest in HAS is exploding (2010: vii).

It is not unreasonable to assume, therefore, that interest in HAS will continue to grow and that future publications, such as Kay Peggs' 'Animals and Sociology' (2012), will greatly aid this process. Additionally, international academic groups such as the Equine Research Network will hopefully ensure that research regarding the horse remains positioned within the broader field of human-animal studies, benefitting from an overall increase in academic interest. The following section will explore some of the concepts and discussions regarding the non-human animal and its importance.

There is no doubting that non-human animals play a significant role in, and have had a significant impact upon, human society. This role, however, is coexistent and interactive. As Bulliet states,

Changing patterns of human-animal relations do indeed teach us about human societies, whether they are predomestic, domestic, or postdomestic. But they also reflect changing realities as to the place of the human species among all animal species. What our prehistoric forebears thought about

animals thousands of years ago, what our great-grandparents thought about animals a century ago, what we think about animals today, and what our grandchildren will think about animals in decades to come has significance beyond our use of animals in human social rituals or economic processes. The fauna of the Earth have a past and a future of which we are but a part (2005: 204).

Essentially, non-human animals are part of our social world, but they are not 'us', they are 'other', where 'us' and 'other' have the ability to interact and transform. In 'Regarding Animals' (Arluke and Sanders) the authors state,

Although animals have a physical being, once in contact with humans, they are given a cultural identity as people try to make sense of them, understand them, or communicate with them. They are brought into civilisation and transformed accordingly as their meaning is socially constructed (1996: 9).

Franklin explores this concept further, arguing that all observation of non-human animals is subject to a cultural filter. He states,

Animals convey meanings and values that are culturally specific; in viewing animals we cannot escape the cultural context in which that observation takes place. There can be no deep, primordial relationship underlying the zoological gaze since it must always be mediated by culture (1999: 62).

Non-human animals are therefore viewed by humans from the perspective of humans, and it is from this perspective that they have been domesticated and brought into use, either as food, tools, pets, or sport. As Birke states,

We have subdued animals to make them domesticated, tamed by contrast to those existing 'in the wild'. We domesticate them as beasts of burden in agriculture, as companions in our homes, for sport of various kinds (1994: 19).

This process of domestication has had multiple impacts upon human society, as Franklin states,

There is also much evidence to show that pets have been drawn ever closer into human society. New foods arrived in the 1980s featuring gourmet ingredients and recipes. Pet graveyards appeared, together with other (human) mortuary rituals such as obituary columns, church services and bereavement counselling. Pet psychologists, trainers and astrologers also became popular....many of these changes in pet keeping suggest a movement from being regarded as mere companions and friends to becoming quasi or pseudo family (1999: 49).

The relationship between pets and humans, therefore, has become far more industrious, with numerous commercial elements developing to cater for a burgeoning marketplace. Franklin also suggests that the modern day relationship with domestic pets is, in fact, a representation of,

...tensions in relationships between humans, particularly those longer term domestic and community relationships. We are not behaving towards animals in an eccentric manner; we are in fact, substituting pets for a range of close human ties (1999: 5).

The relationship between humans and non-human animals is therefore an emotional one, where the non-human animals are subject to something akin to anthropomorphism in the sense that they are part of human cultural meanings. This was also demonstrated by Birke, Hockenhull and Creighton, who argued that horses have a direct impact on human interaction and horse yards can be sites of the negotiation of relationships. As they state,

The yard becomes a space in which human relationships with each other, as well as in relation to horses, are constantly negotiated—for good or ill—(2010: 339).

Inter-human, as well as human and non-human animal relationships, therefore, are subject to social negotiation and the management of an emotional relationship. Taylor, in her study of workers at a non-human animal sanctuary, highlights that the shelter staff had to manage three forms of emotional relationship,

Shelter staff identified that they managed emotions on three different fronts: (1) workers with animals; (2) workers with other workers; and (3) workers with the public (2010: 90).

It is important to note, however, that the shelter staff worked closely together, and with the public in a way that was not necessarily applicable to grooming staff at a riding school.

Taylor, in her 2004 article, found that staff at a non-human animal sanctuary were internally organised into two groups. She states,

During the many internal disputes in the sanctuary, one thing always was present: the idea that those who were involved in the sanctuary for the right reasons—were “in it for the animals”—were classed as good people. Those who were assumed to be in it for the wrong reasons, such as personal accolades, were classed as bad people (2004: 333).

Taylor finds that those considered not to be working in the best interests of the non-human animals “soon were forced to leave the organization or cease to interact with the animals” (2004: 337). She highlights an important facet of reproduction that takes place internally, amongst the staff themselves. The key unique feature of this sanctioning of behaviour and participation is that it uses non-human animals as justification. Being ‘in it for the animals’, implies an altruistic attitude to the non-human animals: the employee ‘cares’. There are important similarities between the presentation of a caring emotion and Hochschild’s research in the airline industry (1983). Instead of human clients, however, the individuals in Taylor’s research are managing their emotions towards the non-human animals. Successful emotion work, in this instance, results in the

classification of a 'good person'. Unsuccessful emotion work results in the opposite and ultimately the 'bad person' is forced to leave.

Considering that non-human animals are culturally bound, with emotion forming a key part of our interaction, it is unsurprising to find gender as a feature of human and non-human animal relations. Some writers theorise the positioning of non-human animals as similar to the positioning of women (Adams and Donovan, 1995; Dunayer, 1995). Adams and Donovan state,

We believe that all oppressions are interconnected: no one creature will be free until all are free- from abuse, degradation, exploitation, pollution, and commercialisation. Women and animals have shared these oppressions historically, and until the mentality of domination is ended in all its forms, these afflictions will continue (1995: 3).

They add that the non-human animal rights debate is “*a haunting repetition of the traditional trivialising of women’s issues*” (1995: 3). The above argument is based firstly on the assumption that non-human animals are exploited by humans. Secondly, Adams and Donovan are stating that the systems of exploitation of women resemble the systems of exploitation of non-human animals. This is argued to be based on the assumption that one group is superior to the other and is referred to as ‘speciesism’. As Dunayer states, “*human superiority is as much a lie as male superiority*” (1995: 23). This superiority is reflected in human language. As Bulliet states,

Calling another person an animal – jackass, bitch, snake, worm, pig, wolf – with the intent of demeaning the person in some way connected with that particular animal seems to be a universal practice (2005: 193).

Non-human animal labels, when applied to humans, are perceived as negative. This language can also display a gendered bias, with non-human animal terms being applied specifically to women as demeaning terms, for example ‘bitch’ and ‘cow’ (Dunayer, 2005). Dunayer argues that,

Viewed through speciesism, a nonhuman animal acquires a negative image. When metaphor then imposes that image on women they share its negativity. Terming a woman a “dog” carries the sexist implication that women have a special obligation to be attractive since the label refers to physical appearance only when applied to females. And so, using dog against any woman indirectly insults all women. The affront to all dogs, however, is direct. Denied individual identities, they merge into Ugly. Without this disdainful view of dogs, dogs would not offend (1995: 12).

The low status position of non-human animals, as well as that of women, is therefore reflected in the language used by humans. Dunayer then takes this viewpoint a step further, frowning on those women who do not recognise the similarities in the two types of oppression. She states,

Few women have confronted how closely they mirror patriarchal oppressors when they too participate in other species’ denigration. Women who avoid acknowledging that they are animals closely resemble men who prefer to ignore that women are human (1995: 19).

Dunayer is arguing that not only does the oppression of women resemble the oppression of non-human animals, but also that those women who participate in the oppression of non-human animals are *like* [my emphasis] men who oppress women. She is effectively making comparison between the forms of oppression not the, either human or non-human animal, recipient of the oppression. This is not the same as arguing that women, with their history of being oppressed, are like non-human animals. Birke, however, argues that this comparison is made within feminist writing. She states,

One strong theme in, for example, feminist fiction is a feeling of empathy with animals or nature, partly as fellow sufferers at the hands of an uncaring society, and partly as sharing qualities – caring and nurturance in particular. Or animals/nature may be portrayed as possessing qualities that even women might envy (1994: 22).

It is these 'shared qualities' of caring and nurturing that relate back to the discussions on occupational segregation and emotional labour earlier in this chapter. Again, these qualities are associated with women and are intrinsically bound up in our understanding of non-human animals. As Birke states,

In suggesting that empathy and respect for nature may have overtones of gender, I am saying that these are qualities that have become stereotyped in western culture as feminine...Some of these qualities [of empathy and caring] might, in some situations, simply be expressed more easily by women because it is socially permitted (1994: 139-140).

Women, therefore, may have easier access to the world of non-human animals not because of any inherent qualities they possess, but simply because it is more socially acceptable for them to display those elements of their characters. Non-human animals become gendered, by their representation, as something that needs to be 'cared for' and 'empathised with', and by the association of those characteristics with women.

So far, this section has focused on the non-human animal as a fairly passive element within a human socially constructed environment. Non-human animals are domesticated and require 'care', industries develop around the keeping of pets, people use non-human animals to substitute human relationships, and emotion work is used within the status negotiations of the workplace. Additionally, comparisons are drawn between the exploitation of non-human animals and the exploitation of women. But are the non-human animals within these relationships perhaps more participatory and active than this? As Birke states,

...animals, despite being part of the nature that science claims to study, are largely missing from feminist debate (1994: 9).

The process of transformation, interaction, and attaching of cultural meaning are not simply done by the humans to the non-human animals. Both the human and the non-human have the ability to affect the behaviour of the other. Brandt

explains that humans and horses create a world of shared meaning and that, because of the physical element to their contact, successful interaction is crucial. She states,

The most obvious difference is the large size of horses in comparison to their human partners. This brings an element of danger into the interaction that rarely is present with dogs and cats, and makes crucial the establishment of an effective communication system (2004: 300).

Brandt argues that there is a shared understanding of bodily gestures between horses and humans, explaining that together they “co-create a system of language—a language of their own—through the medium of the body” (2004: 313). The horse is therefore an active participant in the relationship between themselves and their handlers, and not simply a passive object. Birke adds to this, referring to the communication between herself and the horse as a “complex tactile form of communication (a language?) that enables us to do a range of athletic actions in harmony” (1994: 113-114). She explains that,

Whether we like it or not, there is a reciprocal relationship between the two knowledges, of humans and of animals – each structures the other, and does so within particular political frameworks (1995: 37).

This is clearly not anthropomorphism, interpreting non-human animals as human, but rather an acceptance that non-human animals are living beings with the ability to participate in a social world shared with humans.

5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the theories that will form the basis of my exploration and analysis of gendered occupational segregation within the riding school environment. I have looked at some of the factors associated with occupational segregation by sex, including Hochschild’s concept of the ‘second shift’. I have introduced the concept of ‘indirect aggression’ and theories regarding its meaning

and purpose. I have also introduced the concept of emotional labour and the management of emotion by employees, especially within Nursing. The horse industry has been introduced and I have shown how it is occupationally segregated by sex. Further to that, I have discussed a paucity of research in this specific area, and outlined that research which has proved pertinent to my analysis.

It is these theoretical strands that will guide my analyses, in order to explore how and why the riding school environment continues to be dominated by a female workforce. My theoretical framework will be further developed in the course of this thesis and I will contribute to sociological theory; demonstrating how theories on occupational segregation by sex and emotional labour can be applied to a non-human context.

Chapter Three: Methodology

1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the methods that underpin this thesis. The first section will look at ethnography and I shall explain why I chose this particular method as suitable for the answering of my research questions. Following this I shall explain the rationale behind my fieldwork site selection, the ethical questions with which I was confronted, and how I conducted access negotiations. I shall then present a more detailed exploration of the methodological techniques I used in this thesis. This will lead into a discussion on the analysis, including coding and writing methods, of my empirical data. Lastly, I will detail issues that arose, such as my two pregnancies, throughout the lifespan of the fieldwork.

2 Ethnography

In order to complete a meaningful research project, it is essential that my method enable the effective answering of my research question (Silverman, 2005). As outlined in my introduction, this thesis attempts to uncover the meanings, mechanisms and practices that reproduce occupational segregation by sex in the riding school sector. In order to explain and understand this phenomenon I need to reveal the meanings and processes that are internal to the industry. As Fielding (1993) states, ethnography is unparalleled as a means of gaining insight into social process and culture.

Ethnographic research has a long history. Fielding (1993) states that ethnography can be traced to antiquity, but that it became a distinctive method at the time of the British Empire and was associated with anthropology as a method for studying unfamiliar cultures. As a method, ethnography was termed 'naturalism' and advocated that the social world be studied in a natural setting (Blumer, 1969). The primary aim was seen as describing the setting and accessing the meanings given

to action within the setting. Naturalists argued that positivist methodologies are incapable of accessing these meanings (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). As Hammersley argues,

Human behaviour is complex and fluid in character, not reducible to fixed patterns; and it is shaped by, and in turn produces, varied cultures (1989: 1).

Some proponents of the ethnographic method, such as the Chicago School in the 1920s, found an affinity with positivism and argued for a 'realist' perception of the social world (Hammersley, 1992). 'Realism' refers to the assumption of an external reality, which can be known by the researcher. Critics have argued, however, that this perspective ignores the role the researcher plays in constructing the meaning of their setting (Blumer, 1969). These criticisms reject realism and the idea that meaning can be objectively interpreted. Instead, meaning is seen as unstable, both temporally and spatially, and subject to interpretation. Ethnography as a methodology, although allowing access to individual meanings present in a setting, finds that these meanings are interpreted by the researcher as opposed to being objectively reflected by the interpreter. In other words, reality can be seen as relative.

These concepts have been central to the development of ethnography as a method. In trying to find a way forward for ethnography, which is neither realism nor relativism, Hammersley (1992) discusses the concept of 'subtle realism'. This concept will underpin my methodological approach. Firstly, Hammersley redefines 'knowledge', from 'claims that can be known to be certain', to 'claims that can be plausible, credible, and compatible with our assumptions of the world'. Secondly, he argues that reality is, for the most part, independent of claims made about it. Thirdly, that social research is a representation of reality, one of many possible, rather than a reproduction of a total and external reality. Hammersley argues, therefore, that subtle realism aims to access an independent reality, but can only do so with reference to cultural assumptions. Thus, the representation of reality is related to the researcher, not to the phenomena under investigation and this

representation can be defined as 'knowledge' (Hammersley, 1992). As Liamputtong and Ezzy state,

The interpreted nature of human existence has to be accepted, but this does not mean there is no such thing as objectivity or valid knowledge (2005: 37).

In practice, the implication of subtle realism is that the researcher has to remain aware of her or his cultural assumptions, their impact on research conclusions, and must interrogate both when there is any doubt of validity (Hammersley, 1992). It is therefore important for ethnographers to be reflexive and recognise how their own understandings affect their setting, analysis and research findings.

Baszanger and Dodier (1997) state that ethnography is used in order to uncover phenomena that cannot be deduced without empirical observation; to remain open to possible findings and avoid any pre-codification; and to ground the phenomena in the field. Liamputtong and Ezzy state that,

In general, qualitative research draws on an interpretative orientation that focuses on the complex and nuanced process of the creation and maintenance of meaning (2005: 2).

In order to uncover those processes involved in the creation and maintenance of meaning, ethnography is usually carried out over a long period of time (Skeggs, 2002) with the aim of producing rich, detailed data (Fielding, 1993). Van Maanen explains that *"fieldwork usually means living with and living like those who are studied"* (1988: 2). The ethnographic researcher engages with their setting and utilises a variety of methods including covert or overt observation; interviews; conversation and document analysis (Skeggs, 2002). This *"first hand participation in some initially unfamiliar social world"* (Fretz and Shaw, 1995: 1) enables the production of written accounts and a large body of data. As Baszanger and Dodier state,

Accumulation and processing of these cases can be likened to an ethnographic casebook, which is gradually enriched by new examples displaying new forms of activity and patterns of articulation (1997: 17).

Due to this depth and variety of data, ethnographic research tends to focus on a small number of research settings (Fielding, 1993). The methodological approach I decided to engage in order to answer my research question could be classified as ethnographic as it used a mix of qualitative methods; focused on obtaining rich and detailed data from a limited number of settings; studied phenomena within the setting; engaged in the setting and engaged in building relationships within the setting. Additionally, I was careful to ensure that I remained self-reflexive throughout the process.

The riding school sector, within the horse industry, is a very specific environment that uses its own lexicon and generates its own meanings. My prior experience within the industry gave me one understanding, from the perspective of a groom. But only by becoming 'embedded' in a fieldwork site and immersing myself in the 'world' could I unpick the issues behind occupational segregation by sex. Clearly I faced a risk of 'going native', or being unable to view behaviours as sociologically relevant. I feel I reduced this risk as much as possible by maintaining a focus on my research question and my prior experience as a researcher. Additionally, the de-briefing sessions with my supervisor forced me to 'translate' knowledge from the riding schools to someone unaccustomed to the environment.

Historical analysis and statistical analysis, limited when exploring the setting of the riding school sector, provided just one view of my research questions. Only by direct contact, over a longer duration, could I come to access the behaviours of the participants and the meanings therein. This 'data' could then be analysed against the sociological framework outlined in the previous chapter. This is not to say that the ethnographic method is the only way in which to research the horse industry. So little research has been completed within the industry that I believe it would benefit greatly from a multi-framework approach, by a variety of authors, from

differing disciplines. An engaging ethnography, in this instance, will serve to open the door through which I hope other researchers will follow.

3 Research Design

In the following section I shall outline my research design in terms of my choice of the type and number of fieldwork sites, ethical considerations, and access negotiations.

3.1 Choice of Research Setting

I decided to carry out my research in the setting of the riding school for four main reasons. Firstly, it was clear from my literature review that the riding school sector of the horse industry was an under-researched area. This gap in sociological knowledge has afforded me the opportunity to carry out truly new and unique research. Secondly, I felt that the riding school environment would allow me access to a wide variety of participants, engaged in diverse tasks. A riding school caters for a range of clients who are learning to ride, and/or learning how to care for horses. It also employs grooms to care for the horses, instructors to teach the clients and administrative staff. A riding school may also train employees, on-site, to care for horses and run training courses for paying clients. Riding schools are also generally of different sizes and have different focuses. They can range from the small schools with limited facilities (horses, riding arenas) to large centres with extended facilities (two or more riding arenas, forty plus horses). Riding schools, therefore, offered a degree of diversity which would enable better ‘triangulation’ of my data; checking data for validity by making comparisons between the accounts of various respondents. Thirdly, I have had personal prior experience of riding schools, both as a client and employee. I felt, that this experience would help me in access negotiations as I would be able to demonstrate knowledge of both the specific lexicon in use on site and the routine that is followed by the staff. This, I felt, would assure the ‘gatekeepers’ that I was not a safety liability and that I would not have a negative effect on the normal routine of the yard.

In order to gain a wide breadth of data that would facilitate the answering of my research questions, I carried out my research in two differently sized centres: one large and one smaller. This allowed me access to a range of employed people, including trainee grooms and working pupils; employed grooms; head grooms; riding instructors; yard managers and owners. Carrying out my research in two settings also enabled me to obtain an initial set of data from one site, which could then be broadly analysed and used to inform the collection of data from my second site. Again, this triangulation of data was important in maintaining the validity of my findings.

I began my first stage of fieldwork whilst I was registered as a full-time student. During this period I was at the riding school for two days a week over the course of five weeks. After this was complete, I transcribed the data and began my analyses. I then began my second stage of fieldwork whilst registered as a part-time student. At this site, I was present at the riding school for one day a week over the course of six months.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

There were ethical considerations, which were both apparent prior to the start of my research, and which were generated throughout the course of my research.

At both fieldwork sites, I ensured that participants clearly understood the purpose of my fieldwork. I presented both a consent form and explained my research verbally⁶. All interviewees had signed a consent form prior to the interview. In addition, a large number of individuals who were present at the yard, but did not participate in an interview, signed a consent form. This meant that I could freely use conversational data obtained from them, in my thesis. One individual whose opinions appear in my thesis did not sign a consent form. This was due to his position as an ancillary supporter of the riding school (he was the farrier), and therefore the very limited amount of time I had in contact with him. Conversation

⁶ Consent Form is attached as Appendix A.

with this individual proved pertinent to an element of my thesis dealing with gender. I therefore felt that, by maintaining strict anonymity regarding his identity, I could justify including his opinion in my thesis. Additionally, this individual was aware that I was a researcher and the purpose of my presence at the riding school.

The consent form itself explained who I was, the purpose of my research, and the institution I represented. It detailed the method I would be using and amount of time I would be at the riding school. It also outlined what I would need from them, in terms of time and communications. The form highlighted the confidential nature of the fieldwork, stating that data would be held on my, password protected, home computer. I also explained that the participants had the right to withdraw at any time.

Another ethical issue I needed to give due consideration to was the possible positive or negative impacts I would have on the fieldwork sites, riding school sector and horse industry as a whole. I felt that the benefits of my research for my participants included giving them a forum to discuss the issues they felt were relevant to both their own job roles, and the horse industry. This would potentially afford them a greater understanding of the issues that shaped their workplace, which could result in their resolving any problems they faced. I therefore highlighted the cathartic element of my method. There was, of course, a potentially negative side to creating this forum, in that I prompted my participants to discuss and confront issues they may not have considered otherwise. I therefore ran the risk of generating conflict, where there was none previously. I believe this risk was minimised, however, in the way I interacted with the participants. None of my personal value judgments were verbalised and I maintained neutrality throughout. On one occasion, my unwitting participation in conflict could not be avoided. This particular conflict focused on two individuals attempting to define which tasks I was to complete. A conflicted relationship between the two individuals was, however, in existence prior to my participation. I certainly feel, with hindsight, that although my

participants were asked to confront issues they may have found uncomfortable, I was not the cause or generator of further action by them.

Lastly, I made it clear to my participants that the research aimed to generate a better understanding of the industry which could, potentially, lead to positive change for the workforce. Although many individuals in my research were cynical as to whether 'change' could be achieved, they all sympathised with my attempts. This greatly benefitted the relationship between me and my participants, as it not only placed me as 'on their side' or 'one of them', but it also allowed me to gather further data about the meanings behind their cynicism.

Overall, I feel I had minimal impact on my research sites and this was reflected in the feedback I received from the owners of the two riding schools. The first owner stated that he had not noticed me, which was an indication, for him, that I had not disrupted the yard. He added that the staff had not given him any negative feedback, and that he was unaware whether I had "*made anyone feel happier or less happy*" therefore highlighting his perception that my fieldwork could have had a potentially disruptive affect, but that this had not occurred. The second riding school owner also stated that I had not disrupted the normal routine of the yard and that my presence had caused no problems or issues as far as she could tell.

3.3 Access Negotiations

I carried out access negotiations for my fieldwork in a standard way. I selected a range of riding schools within reasonable distance of my home. I was willing to travel up to two hours to my fieldwork site. Obtaining names and addresses for riding schools was relatively easy; all riding schools have to be registered with the Local Council and this information is free to access. Further detail about the riding school, including size and specialism, could be found via the British Horse Society and the Association of British Riding Schools. The individual I contacted within the school was the owner or manager. Clearly, this restricted the scope of my selection to 'official' riding schools, denying me access to any stables that were giving riding lessons without being registered with an approval organisation. I felt,

however, that negotiating access itself could be challenging and attempting to locate and gain access to unofficial riding schools would unnecessarily complicate the fieldwork. In addition, I was simply not aware of any riding schools operating without official registration, although I am certain that they must exist in some capacity.

Initially, I sent a formal letter, on University of Sussex headed paper, to each riding school. This letter outlined my research and the benefits, to both the school and the horse industry, in participation. It also explained that the letter would be followed by telephone contact within two days. The letter also highlighted the confidential nature of the data collection. When contacting the riding schools by telephone I attempted to ascertain whether they were interested in participation. If they were, I then arranged a visit to the riding school to discuss the research in more detail.

For my first stage of fieldwork, I send out 20 letters to riding schools within a two-hour driving radius. Only one riding school was interested in participation and this ultimately became my first research site. For my second stage of fieldwork, I sent out ten letters to different riding schools in my own local area. I sought to gain access to a local riding school as I had a very young child, which meant I needed to be involved in his nursery transport. My letters resulted in my visiting two riding schools. I selected my final site as it employed far more individuals than the other, which only employed two grooms. Overall, therefore, I only visited three riding schools. The other schools I approached did not want to participate and either gave me specific reasons or simply said “*no thank you*” and refused to give more details. I expected these reasons to be that I would be a demand on time; a threat to the running of the business; or my research would have no value. Retrospectively, however, I believe I underestimated the politicisation of the riding school sector. Some of the owners stated that they did not want to participate in research that was not associated with a formal non-governmental organisation, such as a ‘pressure group’, and would therefore only have, as they perceived, an

academic impact. Others stated that they did not want to be associated with research that they felt could only produce negative results. As one person stated, *“why should anyone want a negative university thesis published about the industry?”* My research, therefore, was viewed simultaneously as both potentially powerful and powerless, and my findings were predicted to be negative. The three owners who consented to my carrying out fieldwork at their riding school also subscribed to this perspective and although they did not think my research would necessarily bring positive change to the industry, they saw no harm in allowing me to complete it. The potential lack of, or negative impact of, my research was not the only reason given for non-participation. As I predicted, owners felt that I would simply take up too much of the staff’s time. In countering this issue, I referred to my previous experience with horses. As Cassidy (2002) discovered in her study of the racing community in Newmarket, pre-existing knowledge of the horse industry did help in my access negotiations. Not only was I seen as ‘one of them’, but also I was able to present myself as being capable around horses and therefore safety conscious. I attempted to create the perception that I was not someone who needed to be monitored and kept safe around potentially dangerous non-human animals. I feel my pre-existing knowledge of the industry, and my ability to participate in the daily routine of my second fieldwork site, greatly aided my access negotiations.

Access negotiations were complicated by the two pregnancies that I experienced during both stages of fieldwork. When negotiating access at the first riding school I was already pregnant and sought to assure the owner that I would not be a liability on the yard. I did this in four ways. Firstly, I highlighted that I was insured by the University of Sussex. Secondly, I referred to my previous experience with horses as evidence that I knew how to remain safe in the presence of horses. Thirdly, I stated that I was still riding horses elsewhere. Lastly, I stated that I would have only limited contact with the horses. My second pregnancy had greater impact at my second fieldwork site, as access was negotiated before my pregnancy had begun. This meant that I began the fieldwork as a participant observer who also

worked alongside the grooms. I had close contact with the horses, although I did not ride. Upon discovering I was again pregnant, I chose to withdraw from working with the horses. I explained the situation to the owner of the riding school who confirmed that by distancing myself from the work of grooms I was causing no disruption to the general daily routine. Overall, whilst my two pregnancies may have had an impact on my level of participation in the work of the groom, it did not negatively affect my access to the riding schools.

4 Methodology

I used a multi-method approach to data-collection within my setting, which consisted of documents (any relevant data collected throughout the research); conversation (the recording of casual conversation); observation (guided by a theme-based schema); and interviews (semi-structured and open-ended). I shall look at each of these methods individually. In selecting these specific methods I was guided by issues of validity. Firstly, as detailed above, I felt that this ethnographic style of research would enable me to answer my research questions as fully as possible. As detailed in the previous chapter, researching occupational segregation within the horse industry is a complex and cross-disciplinary endeavour, which draws from the major theoretical strands of occupational segregation, emotional labour and the field of human-animal studies. Pulling these disparate themes together into a coherent understanding of the mechanisms that underpin women's participation in the riding school sector demanded a broad range of methodological tools. A triangulation of methods also allows for as close an understanding of the 'subtle realism' of a site as possible.

As well as a mixed-method approach, this thesis adheres to further definitions of triangulation as defined by Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005). They state that there are four different types of triangulation:

- Data source triangulation
- Methods triangulation
- Researcher triangulation
- Theory triangulation

Data for this thesis was collected from a variety of sources, and these were checked alongside each other for consistency. Even viewpoints of individuals were interpreted alongside their fellow workers for consistency. As outlined above, I used a mixture of methods, although more quantitative data on the horse industry may have been useful. In terms of research triangulation, my supervisor was able to check my data analyses at each stage of the thesis. As clearly outlined in Chapter Two, I have referred to three broad themes to develop a theoretical framework for this thesis. My analysis, therefore, is not guided by one single perspective and I feel that this three-stranded theoretical framework has allowed me to achieve a certain rigour, as Liamputtong and Ezzy state,

A study has theoretical and conceptual rigour if the theory and concepts are appropriately chosen so that the research strategy is consistent with the research goals (2005: 38).

Furthermore, through my seven years of work on this thesis, I have been rigorous in terms of keeping notes at each stage, data collection, analysis, and writing-up, and wish to maintain an openness regarding my decision making processes. I have included a portion of my research diary within the Appendices.⁷

4.1 Documents

Documentation on the current size and constitution of the horse industry proved difficult to acquire. My three main sources of data were the British Horse Society (BHS), the The Henley Centre's report for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2004), and Lantra, the Sector Skills Council. As explained

⁷ An extract from my research diary is included as Appendix B

in the previous chapter, despite the high approximate turnover of the horse industry, significant and reliable quantitative data is sparse. For all three sources, I found only a limited amount of information on their websites. These included an estimated sizing of the industry and numbers of employees, and a basic breakdown of employees by gender. Both the recent Lantra study (2011) and The Henley Centre's report (2004) recognised the limitation of their data in terms of accuracy. I then contacted both the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the British Horse Society directly. Although the BHS were able to provide me with further data regarding the gender breakdown of their trainees and membership, Defra was unable to give me any information in addition to that which was published on their website. A detailed breakdown of employees by gender, age, ethnicity, and job title was completely absent from the official statistics of the horse industry. Documentation on the history of the horse industry proved far easier to obtain. As shown in the previous chapter, texts have been written regarding the horse through the over time. From these, I was able to gain a good understanding of the role of the horse and its subsequent change in status in the wake of mechanisation. Although these texts rarely mentioned women, and did not deal with the role of the industry post-mechanisation, they proved very useful in piecing together the puzzle of how women entered the industry.

4.2 Participant Observation

Participant observation can refer to, as Lofland and Lofland state,

The process in which an investigator establishes and sustains a many-sided and relatively long-term relationship with a human association in its natural setting for the purpose of developing scientific understanding of that association (1995: 18).

Although I was not present at my fieldwork sites for as long as some ethnographers, it remained important to develop this relationship with my informants. Therefore, upon arriving at my two research sites, I initially engaged in friendly conversation with my participants with the aim to establish a relationship

that would engender an amount of trust. The development of trust was crucial in order to gain access to the values and perspectives of my participants. This relationship developed differently with different people. Although most participants appeared relaxed in my presence after only a short period, some maintained a certain distance. Those who maintained a distance during my fieldwork included the two owners at the first riding school, and the owner and his daughter at the second riding school. These people did become very vocal during the interview stage, which, I felt, balanced out and helped to explain their prior distance.

The majority of conversation with participants consisted of me asking questions and gently encouraging individuals to elaborate on whichever subject they had chosen to discuss. I would also use these occasions to subtly steer conversation towards the subjects of my research, but only if it was within the context of our discussion. I endeavoured to be perceived as an interested individual who would listen to participants without judgment. Occasionally I was questioned about my own experience with horses, but these occasions were limited. I would sometimes volunteer my prior experience with horses in order to encourage a participant to reveal their own experiences. For example, on one occasion, a reference to my own experience served to form a connection between a participant's career aims and myself. This resulted in her becoming very enthusiastic and 'opening up' about how she hoped to progress her career. In generating a degree of trust, I became 'like her'. Overall, however, I tried to avoid discussing my own horse experience in any detail in order to maintain a non-competitive status position. I felt that my behaviour around the horses was sufficient to demonstrate that I had knowledge and could understand the issues my participants were discussing with me. Additionally I engaged in both work and leisure activities with the research participants. This included going off-site for lunch, playing football during the break, and working alongside the grooms. I found myself helping others and being helped, which reflect the statement made by Liamputtong and Ezzy that,

In participant observation, ethnographers may find themselves not only doing things with their informants, but also doing things for them (2005: 170).

This meant that, to a certain degree, the experience of being a researcher, in an environment that I had worked in previously, had a transforming affect on me. I was able to view the environment from simultaneously the position of an outsider and an insider, participating in the life of the riding schools, yet remaining separate. This intersection meant that I had to remain very aware of how my perceptions could be influenced by my prior understanding of the setting. As highlighted by Baszanger and Dodier,

This is conscious work on the part of the observer, who has to control his/her emotional reaction to what is observed and also develop a finely tuned introspection to fully understand the process of transformation which s/he undergoes by being constantly present in the field (1997: 13).

A large proportion of my fieldwork involved simply observing what took place on the yard. During my first stage of fieldwork, my observation method did not involve working alongside the grooms. This was mainly due to my physical state as I felt it would have been unsafe for me to be in close contact with the horses whilst pregnant. During my second stage of fieldwork, I was able to work alongside the grooms, although they were aware of my role as researcher. This meant that I was able to carry out yard duties and partake in the daily routine. I did not take part, however, in any riding. This meant that my access to observation data regarding actual riding was limited. I countered this by observing riding lessons and discussing riding with my participants. Once I became pregnant at my second site, I withdrew again to a position of non-working observer. This occurred towards the end of my second stage of fieldwork and I feel it did not hinder my data collection.

Through my fieldwork period, I continuously carried a digital voice recorder. When appropriate, I found a quiet area in the riding school and took verbal notes. Although I had advised my participants that I would be recording voice notes, I did

not want them to observe me making them. I felt that this would be in conflict with a presentation of myself as an interested individual and would immediately position me as an 'outsider'. Further written notes were made at the end of each fieldwork day, prior to beginning my journey home. All voice recordings and hand written notes were then transcribed onto computer as soon as feasibly possible, usually within two days⁸.

Observations followed an observation schedule that was developed prior to my entry to the site with reference to my initial literature review and theoretical framework. It allowed me to remain focused on the issues that were pertinent to my research, whilst remaining broad enough to give any unexpected findings the opportunity to emerge. The schedule was then re-developed for use at my second site, allowing me to focus on emergent themes⁹.

4.3 Interviews

I carried out long, loosely structured interviews towards the end of both periods of fieldwork. This allowed me time to develop trusting relationships with my participants, which I felt would raise the quality of the data generated in the interviews. Interviews are useful tools for data collection, as Holstein and Gubrium state,

Interview data can be analysed to show the dynamic interrelatedness of the whats and the hows. Respondents' answers and comments are not viewed as reality reports delivered from a fixed repository. Instead, they are considered for the ways that they construct aspects of reality in collaboration with the interviewer (1997: 127).

As with the observation schedule, the interview schedule was initially based on the findings of my research outline, then augmented at my second site to take into

⁸ An example of fieldwork notes included as Appendix C

⁹ The observation schedule is included as Appendix D

account the findings from my first site.¹⁰ As stated by Lofland and Lofland my goal, in using unstructured or semi-structured interviews was to “*illicit from the interviewee rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis*” (1995: 18).

I interviewed a range of employees, including the owners of the two riding schools. In total, I interviewed 16 individuals. Although the owners were initially hesitant about releasing their staff for up to an hour, when it came to organising the interviews I found everyone to be very flexible and accommodating with their time. None of the interviews was restricted in terms of time available. The interviews took place in a number of different settings at the riding school. At the first fieldwork site, all except one interview took place in the on-site ‘bed and breakfast’ accommodation. This setting was private and undisturbed. The interview with the receptionist at the first fieldwork site took place within the reception area. The participant claimed she would be unable to spare any time away from the phones. The interview was relatively undisturbed, in spite of occasional telephone calls. Most of the interviews at the second site took place within a private room next to the reception area. Again, this room was private and undisturbed. One interview, however, took place on the yard whilst a groom cleaned a number of stables. No one else was present and the interview was, rather than being rushed, very relaxed. It was not ideal to carry out an interview this way, but it was the only time the groom was available and I feel the quality of the interview still remained high. Overall, I was very pleased with the level of privacy and the quality obtained in the interviews. I feel the participants were honest, open and very receptive to my questioning. Liamputtong and Ezzy state that “*a good interview is like a good conversation*” (2005: 55) and I certainly felt that this was achieved during the interviews.

All interviews were recorded via a Dictaphone placed in clear sight between the interviewee and me. I transcribed the interviews from the first site in their entirety;

¹⁰ The interview schedule is included as Appendix E

this was a laborious but invaluable process. By transcribing all nine interviews from the first setting, I was able to gain a 'feel' for the data I would have otherwise missed. In repeatedly listening to the interviews I was able to come to a much clearer understanding of some of the meanings my participants gave to their roles and actions. Having achieved this 'closeness' with the first set of data I did not feel it was necessary to transcribe all of the interviews from the second data setting. I employed the services of a transcriber based at the University of Oxford. Anonymity of the participants was strictly maintained, and the transcriber deleted all files from her computer once the work was completed.

5 Analysis

Once all my fieldwork data was collated onto the computer as Microsoft Word documents I was confronted with long process of coding and analysis. This began with a re-reading of all my fieldwork data. As Fretz and Shaw explain,

The ethnographer begins concentrated analysis and writing by reading her field notes in a new manner, looking closely and systematically at what has been observed and recorded. In so doing, she treats the field notes as a data set, reviewing, re-experiencing, and re-examining everything that has been written down, while self-consciously seeking to identify themes, patterns, and variations within this record (1995: 144).

After this initial phase of reading, I began the process of open coding. This was completed manually and did not use qualitative research computer programs such as 'Atlas' or 'Ethnograph'. It is important to point out that my decision not to use software in my analysis was an active choice. I have both Masters Degree training and practical experience in the use of these programs, but felt that I did not want to produce a 'distance' between the data and myself. Although coding by hand can be laborious, it provides the researcher with ample time to get to know the data and revisit it throughout the process. Qualitative software programs are very useful when dealing with larger quantities of data that need to be analysed within a set

timeframe. For my thesis, however, I neither faced a deadline, nor an unwieldy mass of qualitative data. I appreciated the opportunity to get 'close' to my data and, as a result, the meanings being produced by my participants. Additionally, I wished to avoid the possibility of being overwhelmed by a multitude of codes that could not be assembled into a coherent order. As Richards states,

Coding was always a trap to researchers, but its danger is far greater with software [which can lead the researcher to] become over-zealous about coding everything, and making as many categories as possible. This sort of coding fetishism can delay or even destroy a project (2009: 109).

As stated above, I used the process of open coding, therefore allowing the data to guide my framing of the categories for analysis, as opposed to being entirely led by my theoretical framework. Although I am very aware that *“theoretical differences within a discipline may produce almost as marked variations in coding”* (Fretz and Shaw, 1995: 151), my theoretical framework at the point of data coding was undeveloped comparative to its presentation within this thesis. Only by utilising an open coding technique was the data able to highlight the relevance, to my analysis, of emotional labour literature, the concept of indirect aggression, and the intricacies of the field of human-animal studies. As Fretz and Shaw state,

In open coding, the ethnographer should not use pre-established categories to read field notes; rather he should read with an eye towards indentifying events described in the notes that could themselves become the basis for categorisation (1995: 152).

Each set of fieldwork notes and each interview were coded individually, and this took place throughout my fieldwork period. Coding was initially done in great detail. Codes were then amalgamated into similar groupings¹¹. Clearly, this process relies upon a degree of interpretation on my part, and this interpretation was influenced by my previous experience in the horse industry. As Fretz and

¹¹ Coding categories are included as Appendix G

Shaw explain, “*disciplinary background and interests in particular will exert a deep influence on analytic coding* (1995: 151). I felt, however, that my knowledge of the horse industry, rather than hindering or invalidating my interpretation of the data, allowed me a greater understanding of the issues from the perspective of the participants. As already stated my knowledge of sociological theory helped to prevent me from ‘going native’ in my analysis.

Once the code categories were generated, I used my original research outline to help me focus on blocks of data that were pertinent to my research questions and generate some initial thoughts regarding analysis¹². This movement between the data and my original research questions enabled me to further develop my theoretical framework in order to explain the phenomena the data was presenting. Fretz and Shaw explain this by stating that,

Often the researcher is already familiar with the key concepts and interests of her discipline and quickly sees how a given piece of data is relevant to them; but at other times the researcher may have to turn to specific writings that she has not previously read to find pertinent concepts (1995: 154).

By tightening my theoretical framework I was able to begin to focus on areas of the data which would form the basis for meaningful analyses. This process involved setting aside a large quantity of data in order to work with the relevant pieces. I can say with certainty that the sense of personal bereavement induced in the process of ‘discarding’ data was the single hardest element in the process of producing my thesis¹³. It was an essential process, however, and as Fretz and Shaw state,

Through initial coding and memoing the ethnographer identifies many more ideas and themes than she will actually be able to pursue in one paper or monograph (1995: 157).

¹² Initial thoughts are included as Appendix H

¹³ This can be seen from my research diary, an extract of which is included as Appendix B

I hope to have the opportunity to revisit my data in the future and pull out other, sociologically interesting, findings. Ultimately, however, I had research questions to answer and my personal fascinations with other elements of the data had to be set aside in order to continue my analysis.

Once deciding on the core themes of analysis, still based on the issues around occupational segregation and then developed with reference to my data to include emotional labour and the field of human-animal studies, I revisited the data in order to collate phenomena by theme. Doing this enabled me to add further detail to my coding categories, from the perspective of an improved theoretical framework. This is coherent with Fretz and Shaw description of the process, who state,

Having decided on core themes and perhaps having sorted the field notes accordingly, the ethnographer next turns to a fine-grained, line-by-line analysis of the notes in focused coding. This involves building up and elaborating analytically interesting themes (1995: 160).

At this stage I began the process of writing up, beginning by rewriting my relevant pieces of data into a more readable format¹⁴. Once the coding and the process of categorisation by theme were complete, I began the first stage of writing up, developing a comprehensive chapter outline. This allowed me to pull out key sections from the data that could be used as examples within the main body of the thesis. Upon completing this first stage of writing, I again turned to both the data and literature in order to clarify my analyses. As Richards explains “*reading and reflecting on data should ideally never be a one-pass process*” (2009: 85). Throughout my analysis chapters, I refer to instances from the data that highlight the analytical points I am making. This is done with the aim of keeping the reader close to the data, enabling my analysis and conclusions to be as transparent as possible. It is important to note, however, that although ethnography is developed from fieldwork and empirical data, systematically coded and developed into

¹⁴ Example of summarized interview included as Appendix I

thematic categories for analysis; it does not claim to represent an objective 'reality'. This, as detailed earlier in this chapter, is not the aim and as Richards explains "you [ethnographers] *are almost certainly not setting out to claim you have the only 'right' answer to your research question*" (2009: 147). Ultimately, with my analyses, I hope to have produced one representation of the culture of the riding school that enables an understanding of the occupational segregation of the sector. This is summed up well by Van Maanen, who states that,

Putting pen to paper and producing a representation that is persuasive, methodic, empathetic, and aimed at some general insights based on the particular is the real rite of passage into fieldwork circles (1988: 139-140).

I hope that by carrying out a systematic analysis, alongside theoretical development and integration, this has been achieved.

6 Issues Arising

I did not feel that many irresolvable issues arose regarding my choice of method. Clearly, there was a lack of background quantitative data about the horse industry, but I do not feel this negatively affected my qualitative data collection. My two pregnancies also had an impact on my access negotiations and the level of my participation in the daily routine of the yards, as well as preventing me from riding the horses¹⁵. This definitely restricted the scope of my data collection. My second pregnancy had a far greater impact than my first pregnancy. At my first fieldwork site, I was pregnant whilst negotiating access. This meant that when I started my fieldwork I presented the role of 'researcher', which was maintained throughout. The participants were clear regarding my status and treated me as an independent 'other'. I was perceived as 'neutral' and not part of any conflict. Although, at my second fieldwork site, the participants were aware I was a researcher, I began my fieldwork as a fellow groom, which subtly altered my status. My status was

¹⁵ Details of my the impact of pregnancy can be demonstrated in the research diary extract included as Appendix B

perceived as flexible depending on the requirements of those with me. As one can see from an incident I describe in my fieldwork notes,

*During the afternoon I had been asked by Fiona to tack up a particular horse. Later that same day, Beth explained that she had been “really p*ssed off” at Fiona for asking me to do that task. Beth felt that Fiona had not finished her mucking out quickly enough and I had been asked to do some of her work so that she could go out on a ride with the other grooms.*

Although it is clear that Fiona and Beth both perceived me to be of different status, what is crucial is that they perceived me to be within the status hierarchy. At my first fieldwork site, I was outside of this hierarchy. As soon as my role of ‘researcher’ became less clear, as at the second fieldwork site, I became subject to strategic positioning by the other grooms. Once I announced my pregnancy and withdrew from yard-related tasks I immediately became classed as a ‘researcher’ and my status position again stepped ‘outside’ of the internal hierarchy. The brief time I spent working on the yard was crucial in increasing my understanding of the yard dynamics and this thesis may well have benefitted had that period been longer.

Another issue that arose in terms of fieldwork choice dealt with my second site. When approaching this site I was aware that I had had contact with them four years previously. The owner had offered me a job as a groom when I first moved into the local area. I had not taken the post at the time and was correct in thinking that the owner would not remember me. I was very careful not to mention this to the owner as I thought it would prejudice her opinion of me.

Lastly, one individual reacted negatively towards me during my fieldwork. This person maintained a distance from me and, although not overtly hostile, for a while appeared to want nothing to do with the research or myself. I was polite and friendly to her throughout and worked to ensure that I did not react to her negativity by allowing her to withdraw. My efforts during the fieldwork stage were rewarded

as she became very talkative during the interview and delivered one of the most revealing and personal interviews of them all.

7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the methodological approach that I used to complete my thesis. The concept of 'subtle realism' has been explored in terms of how I conceive of my own analytical knowledge and analysis of the fieldwork sites. I have explained the ethnographic basis of my methods, arguing that it was the only method I felt was adequate to answer my specific research questions. I have highlighted, however, that had further quantitative data been available I would have included it in my analyses. The tools of my methodological approach (documents, conversation, observation, and interviews) have been explained in detail. I have explored the process of my analysis, highlighting my choice to utilise a manual method of data analysis rather than a computer assisted method. I then explained my systematic approach to open coding and categorising my data in order to draw out themes for development. This allowed me to revisit my theoretical framework and literature review, developing it considerably to take into account the findings from my data. Lastly, I discussed the issues that arose during my periods of fieldwork. These were, thankfully, minimal and the main issues focused on my own management of my pregnancies. My dealings with the one of the participants taught me a very valuable lesson regarding how not to personalise people's response to me as a researcher.

In the following chapter, I shall introduce my fieldwork sites, the participants, and the work that they completed.

Chapter Four: The Setting

1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall introduce the fieldwork sites, the individuals that participated in my research and the tasks they engaged in on a daily basis. One aim of this is to provide an understanding of the 'world' of the riding school for those who may be neophytes. Additionally, I have included a glossary of commonly used terms in the appendix. I will therefore begin with a basic outline of the physical spaces, highlighting any similarities and differences between the two sites. The research participants will be introduced in terms of their job titles, history, and motivations that resulted in their working at the riding school. I will then detail the tasks that the various participants engaged in on a daily basis. Throughout this chapter, I shall define the horse-specific terminology that is in use with this thesis.

2 The Setting

Fieldwork for this thesis was carried out within two different settings, both of which were riding schools. A riding school is a privately run business where horses, kept on site, are ridden in lessons during which an instructor teaches a paying client. Two brothers owned the first site, which I shall refer to throughout by the pseudonym 'Knightly'. One of the brothers lived in a house situated at the riding school and appeared rarely to participate in the affairs of the school. The second brother actively managed the yard and lived off-site. Knightly was an established riding school, which had been owned by the family for more than three generations. A mother and daughter owned the second site, which I shall refer to by the pseudonym 'Sampson'. Both owners of Sampson participated in the running of the school. The mother lived on-site and the daughter lived off-site with her husband and two children. When I completed my fieldwork, the owners had only been in their current premises for one year. Prior to this, the mother ran a riding school elsewhere. The owners of Sampson also ran a horse rescue charity,

based on the same site. Both sites were therefore similar in that they were 'family-owned establishments', but there was a clear gender difference between the two: Knightly (the older school) was owned by males and Sampson (the newer school) by females.

Both sites were open to clients from Tuesday to Sunday and staff were on site seven days a week. As well as riding lessons, the riding schools ran a number of horse-based events. Whilst completing my fieldwork both Sampson and Knightly ran 'pony days' (where children came to the school over a number of days to care for and ride the horses) and 'examination days' (where pre-existing and new clients paid to take industry-specific examinations). Knightly also held a riding competition for adults, which took place over the course of a weekend and a training course for adults, which took place during the week. Knightly was certified by the British Horse Society (BHS) to host a number of different BHS examinations and was a BHS approved training centre. Sampson was certified to hold only the BHS Riding and Road Safety examination¹⁶. This difference had a direct impact on the type of clients that would frequent each riding school. Whereas Sampson attracted leisure riders that mainly rode in lessons on a weekly basis, Knightly also attracted clients that were more qualification orientated and wished to progress through the BHS examinations structure. The additional clients that participated in training courses generated financial revenue that was not available to Sampson, and this was reflected in the quality of the facilities although the type of facilities remained the same.

My research sites were similar and they shared many of the same physical characteristics. Differences were present, however, within physical locations that initially looked similar. I shall look at the locations in terms of similarities and differences, explaining relevant terminology as I progress.

¹⁶ Information regarding riding school status from:
http://www.bhs.org.uk/Training_and_Qualifications/Where_To_Train.aspx

2.1 Reception

The reception area, in both riding schools, was the first contact point for clients and potential clients. They were accessible to members of the public, whether in the form of clients waiting for a lesson, or individuals making enquiries. An individual could walk into the reception area and enquire about riding lessons even if they were not an existing client of the riding school. For this reason, the reception areas were located close to the main entrance of the premises, ensuring that members of the public did not have to walk through the other areas of the riding school in order to make their enquiry. At Knightly, the reception area was a lively area, continuously occupied by a receptionist. In addition to the receptionist and clients, other members of staff often entered the reception area to enquire about lessons or, on occasion, to sit and have lunch. The walls displayed information about upcoming events on site. During events at Knightly such as pony days, or BHS examination days, clients would often congregate in the reception. Although the reception area at Sampson served a similar purpose to that at Knightly, it was a far quieter room and I often found it empty.

The differences between the two reception areas could have been due to the positioning of the reception areas in relation to the riding school's car park. Clients waiting for their lesson at Knightly generally did so in reception; whereas at Sampson they generally waited by the stables. The parking at Knightly meant that all visitors would pass reception, whereas the parking at Sampson was within the school premises, making the stable block closer to visitors than the reception area. Clients at Sampson may have found it more convenient to enquire to the stable staff regarding the details of their lessons rather than having to walk a distance to the reception area.

2.2 The Yard

The stable blocks, tack room, hay barn and feed room, were situated in the riding school's 'yard'. This area was staffed by the grooms and only certain sections were accessible to the clients. Members of the public who were not clients would

not be able to frequent these areas without causing a degree of suspicion. Clients could be distinguished from members of the public by their attire and their destination. Clients would generally wear riding clothes and be either collecting or returning a horse.

2.3 Stable Blocks

I shall use the term 'stable blocks' to refer to the areas in the yard that housed the horses in individual stables. Knightly's yard contained five stable blocks. Two of these housed riding school ponies (small horses), one was for livery horses (the stables were rented to private horse owners) and the remaining two were used by riding school horses. Sampson's yard contained four stable blocks. Two of these were for riding school horses and a small number of ponies and one was used for a stallion and his companion. The last stable block housed rescue ponies under the auspices of a charity run also by the owner of the riding school.

The stable blocks at both riding schools were similar in that they contained a varying number of horses depending on which were needed in the school and how many could be put out in the fields. Knightly was capable of housing approximately 23 horses, ten ponies and six livery horses. Sampson was capable of housing approximately 28 horses, four ponies and 12 rescue ponies.

Both yards contained an area for the storage of tools, and the removal of horse waste (a muck heap). At Knightly the muck heap was accessible over concrete and at Sampson it was along a mud track. This had an impact upon the grooms as wheeling a full wheelbarrow across concrete was far easier than wheeling it across mud.

Stable blocks, with the exception of the rescue yard at Sampson, were centrally positioned and proximate to each other. Although physically accessible, the far ends of the stable blocks were not frequented by clients and they normally waited at the entrance to collect their horse. The further one penetrated the area, the more it became a private space solely for the use of the grooms.

Clients did not enter the rescue yard at Sampson. Access was physically hindered by two small entrances on one side of the building, away from the view of the public. Grooms also rarely entered the rescue yard, unless they were working in the stables therein.

2.4 Tack Room

Knightly and Sampson both had a room, which contained the horses' 'tack', or riding equipment. Riding school clients did not enter the tack room as their horses were already 'tacked up' when they retrieved them for a lesson. The status of the tack rooms at both riding schools fluctuated depending on who was present and grooms were not as free with their speech in the tack room as they were in the far reaches of the stables.

2.5 Hay Barn and Feed Room

The hay barn and feed room were used, by the grooms, for the preparation of the horses' food. At both sites, these rooms were very similar both in content and general location. The hay barns at Knightly and Sampson were both located on the edge of the building premises accessible through the other yards and around a further corner. The hay barns were sizable and contained bales of hay, which were stacked to the ceiling. Grooms at both sites worked in the hay barns whilst filling empty nets with hay. The hay nets were then carried to the stables to be hung over the doors for the horses to eat. The hay barns were inaccessible to riding schools clients and this was reflected in the type of behaviour that took place within them. When in the hay barns, the grooms, although mainly engaged in filling hay nets, also practiced work avoidance. Being in the hay barn gave staff the opportunity to chat whilst working slowly and without any urgency. They recognised that this was a forbidden activity and whenever someone approached the barn, the grooms were quick to begin working again. Work avoidance in the hay barn was able to take place both because of its physical location (out of sight) and because grooms were expected to be there for an extended period of time in order to fill hay nets. The phrase *"I'm going to do the nets"* implied that the

individual would not be seen for a while. Stretching this period of time, in order to engage in more relaxed behaviour, was an easy feat. Lastly, the task of filling the hay nets was one of the least enjoyed tasks on the whole yard. Any threat to the groom's ability to use the hay barn as a place for work avoidance was dealt with swiftly by the grooms. On one occasion the owner of Sampson attempted to relocate the task of filling the hay nets to the space outside of the stable blocks. This would have made the grooms visible and removed their ability to engage in relaxed interaction. Every single groom simply ignored the owner's request and continued to use the hay barn. As much as the grooms disliked the task of filling hay nets, they appeared to appreciate the rare opportunity to engage in 'off-duty' interaction. The hay bales themselves were also objects of fun and bravado. In order to manipulate the bales into position, they had to be pushed down from the top of a very high pile. Often I saw grooms encouraging each other to climb higher up the bales and this was one of the more dangerous activities I witnessed taking place at the riding schools.

The horse feed rooms were more centrally located than the hay barns and, at both sites, were situated close to the largest stable block. Both feed rooms were small rooms containing bins filled with horse foodstuff. Grooms prepared feed in the feed rooms towards the end of the day. As opposed to the hay barn, however, time spent in the feed room was limited.

2.6 Schooling Areas

The schooling area refers to the enclosed arenas where riding lessons took place. Knightly and Sampson both had arenas that measured at least 20mx40m. Sampson's schooling area consisted of one indoor arena. Knightly's facilities, in comparison, were luxurious. They consisted of five schooling areas, including two indoor arenas; one outdoor arena; one outdoor show jumping area and one outdoor cross country area.

At the start of a riding lesson, clients at both establishments would collect their horses from outside the stable block and walk them to the schooling area. The

horses would have already been tacked up and removed from the stable by the grooms. The instructor would usually walk with them to the schooling area and would lead the lesson from the centre of the area or arena. There would usually be more than one person in each lesson. On completion of a lesson the clients would bring their horses back to the yard and either give them to a member of the yard staff or, if they knew the location, lead them into their stable. Unless partaking in a lesson themselves, grooms were not present in the schooling areas.

The schooling areas, unlike the tack room or stable block, had no flexibility in terms of their status. During a staff lesson, the grooms assumed the role of clients, and interacted with the instructor in a formal manner.

2.7 Fields

The horses were released into fields to give them exercise and freedom of movement. Both fieldwork sites had a number of grass fields in which to 'turn out' their horses. At both sites each field had its own entrance and approach, and was referred to by a name such as 'top field' or 'field two'. No information was presented regarding the names of the fields or the location of the horses. This information had to be absorbed by asking other grooms and by frequent trips to the fields. The process was complicated by the fact that horses were frequently moved onto different fields and instruction to move the horses came from Keith, at Knightly, or Sarah, at Sampson. This 'language' of the fields was very similar to the findings from horse yards made by Cassidy (2002) and Nusser (2004). Nusser highlighted that the use of a 'secret language' enabled the grooms to differentiate the 'insiders' from the 'outsiders'. The field locations and names had to be learnt quickly by a new employee as they could not afford much time to ask directions or take a fellow worker with them to demonstrate the route. In spite of the short length of time some of the grooms had been employed, not one of them appeared lost or confused when going to or from the fields. Clients were not permitted to go to the fields, and the livery clients' field bordered the yard, ensuring that they did not encroach on the rest of the land.

2.8 Other Similarities and Differences

The fieldwork sites were broadly similar in terms of the physical areas they comprised. In terms of location, both establishments were in the countryside, surrounded by fields. Aesthetically, Sampson was not as tidy and clean as Knightly, which had a lot more ground laid to concrete that could be more easily swept. Knightly also had more land than Sampson, although the land use was very similar. In terms of clients, Knightly seemed to be the busier establishment. This could have been associated with location (Knightly was based close to a number of large towns) and length of time the school had been established (Sampson, although relocating from another premises, had only been at their current site for one year). It could also have been associated with the differences in facilities and training opportunities. Knightly had both more extensive facilities and was a BHS approved training and examination centre, which could have served to increase their clientele.

3 The Protagonists

In the next section I shall introduce the ‘protagonists’, the main participants of my research. I shall also present their own narratives on how they came to be working at their particular site. I have included 17 main fieldwork participants in this section, as well as a small number of other individuals who were generally only present at the yard for a limited period. I did not complete an interview with Fiona, although I engaged her in lengthy informal discussion regarding her work and history. Therefore the 17 participants detailed here number one greater than the 16 interviews I completed. All names specified here are pseudonyms.

3.1 Knightly

The following nine individuals worked at Knightly whilst I carried out my research. All but one member of staff was employed legally, or ‘on the books’ and all were paid slightly above the minimum wage.

3.1.1 Abby (24yrs)

Abby was the longest serving member of the yard staff at Knightly and had worked at Knightly for six years as a full-time groom. She owned a horse, which she housed in the livery yard. As a member of staff, she received reduced costs to board her horse at the riding school and this enabled her to afford the cost of the horse whilst, at the same time, prevented her from easily resigning her job. After finishing school, Abby went to a local agricultural college to complete a one-year course in horse care. On completion, she worked at a show jumping livery yard where she stayed for six months. Upon leaving this yard, she worked with her family as part of their tiling business. Abby saw the job for a groom at Knightly advertised in a local paper. When she replied to the advert, she had an interview with the owner and receptionist, and was shown the yard. Abby was offered the job on the same day as her interview and started work a couple of days later.

3.1.2 Becky (20yrs)

When I started my fieldwork, Becky had been working as a full-time groom at Knightly for six months. Prior to working at Knightly, Becky had worked at Heathrow as a trainee engineer. Becky's mum saw an advert for a post at Knightly advertised on the internet and although Becky hesitated in applying (she had been gifted a horse by her dad and did not know if she wanted to work with horses) her mum encouraged her to apply. Once Becky contacted Knightly she was interviewed and offered a job within a few days. Like Abby, Becky had her own horse liveried at Knightly, which greatly reduced her ownership costs as well as her ability to resign her post.

3.1.3 Donna (21yrs)

Donna had been working as a full-time groom at Knightly for two days when I started my fieldwork. Prior to this she had been working as a mortgage consultant, having recently completed an Information Technology course at a local college. Her previous employers informed her that she was to be made redundant at the end of the year and Donna expressed an interest in working at Knightly. She was

an existing riding school client and was offered a job as a groom after a short interview.

3.1.4 Paul (16yrs)

Paul, Becky's brother, had been working as a full-time groom at Knightly for just over a month. Before coming to Knightly, he worked as a weekend member of staff for a local butcher. Becky had told Paul that Knightly were looking for more staff and when he expressed an interest in the job, he was interviewed by the owner and the receptionist. They explained what the work would involve and offered him the job.

3.1.5 Chloe (17yrs)

Chloe was completing a six-week period of work experience at Knightly as part of a National Diploma in Horse Management. She worked as an unpaid, full-time, groom for the entire time I was based at the yard. Prior to starting her work experience, she had been working at Knightly as a part-time groom for 18 months. Chloe had been riding at Knightly as a client since she was 11 years old and had also worked at another yard whilst at school. After completing school, Chloe started studying for her A-levels, but after two months she decided she preferred working in an outdoor environment. After discussing the issue with a careers advisor at the college, an interview was arranged for her at the local agricultural college. Chloe passed the interview and immediately changed onto her new course.

3.1.6 Rachel (42yrs)

Rachel worked at Knightly as a full-time receptionist and office manager. She started working at there in 1997. Rachel then had an employment break to have her second child. After six months, she returned to work at Knightly on Sundays. She initially refused an offer of full-time work at the riding school stating that the level of pay was too low in comparison to her prior job in sales. She was offered the post again a month later, and agreed to begin working full-time once her son started school. Rachel also negotiated a higher pay than previously offered, but

told me that she had still taken a substantial pay cut to work at Knightly. She started working full-time for Knightly in 2003, had two horses boarded on the livery yard at Knightly, benefitting from reduced livery costs.

3.1.7 Edith (59yrs)

Edith was a part-time groom at Knightly. She was not a legal member of staff as she was paid on a 'cash in hand' basis. She had been boarding her horses at Knightly as a livery client, moving them to the school after the death of her husband. She then began helping out on the yard when Knightly was short of staff. Initially, Edith had suggested she help out in exchange for stable bedding for her horse. She eventually agreed, however, to take cash payment in return for three day's work.

3.1.8 Karen (19yrs)

Karen, the daughter of the riding school's owner, Keith, worked at the yard for the summer and was present whilst I completed my fieldwork. She had just completed her first year at university studying veterinary science and worked as both a full-time groom and riding instructor. Karen had been teaching clients at Knightly since she was approximately 13 years old. Her grandparents originally bought the property of Knightly and developed it into a riding school, so she grew up in the environment of a riding school with memories of her dad and mum teaching clients throughout her childhood. She boarded her competition horse at Knightly's livery yard.

3.1.9 Keith (50+yrs)

Keith was the co-owner of Knightly along with his brother. Keith's brother did not partake in this study and was introduced to me only once. The two of them had been running Knightly for approximately 23 years. Keith remembers having horses as a child, but only started working with horses when he was 20 years old. Keith had been an examiner for the British Horse Society and held his BHS Instructor qualification. He also has his own competition horse based at Knightly.

3.2 Sampson

The following individuals all worked at Sampson. Most of the grooms at Sampson were full-time 'working pupils' receiving pay, of £2.50 per hour, in return for training towards their British Horse Society examinations. This was the case even though Sampson was not a BHS approved training centre. I shall refer to these individuals as 'students'. Other members of staff were employed by the riding school, and paid just above the minimum wage.

3.2.1 Debby (22yrs)

Debby was a student who had been working at Sampson for three months. She began working with horses when she was 18 years old and had worked in a variety of yards, including a yard in America, before coming to Sampson. Debby had worked for the owners of Sampson at their previous establishment. On returning from working in a yard in London, Debby approached the owner and asked for work. She was offered, and accepted, a student position.

3.2.2 Beth (20yrs)

Beth had been working as a student at Sampson for 11 months. Prior to this she had been at college studying art and photography. On completion of her course she took various low-skilled jobs before becoming unemployed. Beth then saw an advert for the job at Sampson in a local newspaper, contacted the owner and was invited for an interview. She was offered a student position straight away. Apart from a brief period when she was ten years old, Beth had not ridden prior to working at Sampson.

3.2.3 Adele (25yrs)

Adele worked at Sampson as an instructor as well as a full-time yard manager. She had been riding horses since she was a child and studied Equine Studies at college when she was 16 years old. She then worked as a student at a yard in Gloucestershire. After gaining her British Horse Society qualifications she changed career and began working in the public house trade. She eventually ran her own pub, before stopping to return to working with horses. Adele had contacted the

owner of Sampson and was interviewed before being offered the job. She loaned a horse from the riding school, which was kept on site.

3.2.4 Carol (16yrs)

Carol had been working for the owner of Sampson for five years both at the riding school's previous and current premises. She started by working as a part-time groom at the weekend, but once she completed school, she began working as a full-time student.

3.2.5 Ella (19yrs)

Ella had worked as a full-time groom at Sampson for two years. She only worked with the horses and ponies in the rescue yard. Ella's family was involved with horses and she had owned a number as she was growing up. She started working at a racehorse yard when she was 15 years old, but unfortunately had a riding accident and broke her back. Although she was riding her own horses again within a short period, she took two years out from working in the industry. When she returned she contacted the owner of Sampson and was offered a groom's post. Ella owned a number of horses, all of which were kept at a site owned by her mother.

3.2.6 Fiona (30yrs)

Fiona was a student at Sampson, who was approximately 30 years old. She had only recently joined the riding school and prior to this she had been in the USA with her boyfriend. Whilst in the USA she had worked at a riding centre, but otherwise she had limited experience with horses. Fiona also had a degree in Engineering which she had gained in the United Kingdom.

3.2.7 Sheila (60+yrs)

Sheila was the co-owner of Sampson with her daughter Sarah. Sheila had been in contact with horses for as long as she could remember and owned her first pony when she was very young. When she was 18 years old, she took a break from horses. Approximately 18 years later, when her daughter was five years old, she

bought another horse. Thirteen years later, she bought a riding school with her husband. When her marriage ended Sheila moved to the south of England to open a horse rescue centre, after which she rented another premises and opened a riding school. Two years ago, she bought premises then, one year ago, moved both the riding school and rescue yard to its new location at Sampson.

3.2.8 Sarah (38yrs)

Sarah was the co-owner of Sampson with her mother. She worked at Sampson as an instructor and was responsible for the running of the yard. Sarah started having riding lessons when she was approximately seven years old. When she finished school, she began training to be an instructor and at 18 years old her family bought a riding school. She then relocated to the south of England and finally to Sampson with her mum.

3.3 Details of Research Participants

Below are two tables that provide summary details regarding the research participants.

Individual	Job	Time worked at Current School	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Riding since
Abby	Groom (f/t)	6 years	24	F	White British	11/12 yrs old
Becky	Groom (f/t)	7 months	20	F	White British	18 yrs old
Donna	Groom (f/t)	3 weeks	21	F	White British	9 (break from 16-20)
Paul	Groom (f/t)	1 month	16	M	White British	1 month
Chloe	WE(f/t) Groom (p/t)	18 months (p/t)	17	F	White British	4 yrs old
Rachel	Receptionist	6 years (p/t) 2 years (f/t)	42	F	White British	As long as can remember
Edith	Groom (p/t)	9 months (p/t)	59	F	White British	3 yrs old
Karen	Groom/Instructor (p/t)	6 years	19	F	White British	As long as can remember
Keith	Owner	23/24 years	50+	M	White British	Approx 14 yrs old

Table four: summary of research participants at Knightly

Individual	Job	Time worked at Current School	Age	Sex	Ethnicity	Riding since
Debby	Student/Groom/ Instructor	3 months	22	F	White British	8 yrs old
Beth	Student/Groom	11 months	20	F	White British	11 months
Adele	Yard Manager/Instructor	10 months	25	F	White British	8 yrs old
Carol	Student/Groom	4 years (p/t) 6 months (f/t)	16	F	White British	12 yrs old
Ella	Groom	2 years	19	F	White British	Brought up around horses
Fiona	Student/Groom	1 month	30	F	White British	1 year
Sheila	Owner	2 years at current premises	60+	F	White British	Six months old
Sarah	Owner	2 years at current premises	38	F	White British	Brought up around horses

Table five: summary of research participants at Sampson

3.4 Additional Individuals

During the course of my fieldwork I met a range of individuals whom I did not have the opportunity to interview. I have included a brief description of them below.

Harry was Knightly's handyman and was approximately 60 years old. He worked at Knightly in exchange for caravan accommodation on the premises as well as the opportunity to ride and partake in competitions. Peter was present at Knightly for two weeks as part of his work experience for a veterinary course and was approximately 19 years old. Knightly also employed the regular services of a farrier. He was present at Knightly once a week and was assisted by one male

trainee, one female trainee and one female work experience pupil. The farrier was approximately 40 years old, the trainees approximately 17 years old, and the pupil approximately 15 years old.

3.5 Analysis of Participants

A number of issues become apparent when looking at the basic details of the participants. Firstly, it was clear that the participants were occupationally segregated by sex, reflecting the findings within the literature review regarding the horse industry. At the fieldwork sites, only five from a total of twenty individuals were male. Of those five, one was a handyman at Knightly; one was Knightly's farrier; one was a veterinarian student; one was Knightly's owner; and the last was a groom. Only one male, therefore, occupied the low status position of groom and the others were in ancillary positions or, as in one case, were the riding school owner. There were no male participants based at Sampson. This gender split was perceived by the participants as being reflective of the horse industry as a whole with the tendency for grooms to always be female. Additionally, there was a clear perception that the industry was occupationally segregated vertically by sex. Whilst grooms were female, those who competed on horses at a high level were perceived to be male. Rachel highlighted this and stated,

They [females] are the ones that do all the grafting and the hard work and yet it's the boys that actually go out there compete and get to the top of the fields on the competition sides.

Karen echoed this perception and explained that although women dominated in the less professional competitions, a rise in level saw an increase in the proportion of male participants. Chloe also supported this, adding,

all the top riders are like men, a lot of them anyway are men, you go to competitions and it's all like, men, men, everywhere...yet at riding schools and places like this you never see them really, apart from like Paul and Keith...you never get as many men working here as you would women.

Some of my participants stated that the racing industry contained greater numbers of men. Three individuals felt that there were either equal numbers of men and women in racing, or that the numbers of men outweighed women. As explored by Cassidy (2002), however, the situation in racing is more similar to what I observed in the riding school sector. She stated that women dominated the position of 'lad' (groom), but that men held the high status positions. Again, due to the lack of statistical data on the riding school sector, although one can state that grooms, instructors, and trainees are mainly female, it is difficult to ascertain the levels of vertical segregation by sex.

In addition to the clear occupational segregation, it was apparent that the participants tended towards homogeneity of length of employment, age and prior experience with horses. Abby, at Knightly, was the longest serving groom and had been working at the riding school for six years and Ella had worked at Sampson for three years. Other than these three participants, not one of the independently employed (i.e. not an owner or relative) full-time grooms had worked at their riding school for longer than one year. This amounts to eight participants who had worked full-time at their riding school for fewer than 12 months. Four other participants had worked at the riding school on a part-time basis for a longer period. Only Rachel and Carol, however, could count this time in years. This finding implies a very high turnover of grooms within the riding schools.

In terms of age, all the grooms, with the exception of Edith and Fiona, were 25 years old and younger. The youngest grooms were Paul and Carol, aged only 16 years old. When coupled with the short employment lengths, one sees how younger staff are being employed to do very physically demanding jobs, that are low paid, and are soon leaving to seek employment elsewhere. Yet in spite of the low age group and short employment time, most of the grooms had some previous experience with horses, either as clients, owners, or grooms at other yards.

Although data was limited in this area, there also appeared to be an educational element to participant within the riding schools. Grooms were limited in terms of

education, with general qualification levels stopping at a small number of GCSE qualifications. Grooms such as Donna, Debby, Adele at Sampson and Abby at Knightly were either pursuing or had obtained horse industry specific qualifications. Additionally, all the students at Sampson were engaged in a process of training for their British Horse Society Qualifications. The owners of the riding schools were equally limited in terms of formal qualifications, with the exception of Karen, who was engaged in a Bachelors Degree in Veterinarian Studies. Keith, Sheila and Sarah all had British Horse Society qualifications and Keith, had recently worked as a BHS examiner. Franklin argues that there is a link between the keeping of non-human animals and social class. He states that, “...*the social identity invested in pets mirrored social class: the wealthy kept pet ponies...*” (1999: 42). It is not unreasonable to argue that those who were involved in the care of the horse at the riding schools were of a lower social class than both those who owned the riding schools and those who paid for instruction. Of those who owned horses and worked in the riding school, only one kept her horses at a different yard: Ella. The others (Edith, Rachel, Abby, Becky) kept their horse at the riding school and received a discount from their livery fees. This meant that finding work elsewhere would involve moving their horses and incurring extra financial cost. Additionally, Adele, who loaned a horse from Sampson, was only able to do so because of the reduced cost. Therefore, horse ownership, when the horse is liveried at the owner's place of work, is not necessarily an indication of wealth or high social status.

Lastly, it was apparent that the research participants could be categorized into three groups: the ‘lifers’, the ‘accidents’, and the ‘seekers’. The ‘lifers’ were those, such as Abby, Karen, Keith, Edith, Rachel, Chloe, Debby, Adele (Sampson), Ella, Sheila and Sarah. These individuals had planned to join the horse industry and had been around horses for a substantial period of their lives. The ‘accidents’ consisted of Becky, Paul, Carol and Beth. These individuals did not plan to work with horses, but came across the industry almost by accident. The ‘seekers’ consisted of Donna and Fiona. These two had eschewed better paid work

opportunities elsewhere in order to pursue a career they thought would give them more emotional fulfilment and they had limited experiences of horses prior to their joining the riding school. As I shall discuss in Chapter Seven, using Fiona as an exemplar, the 'seekers' were not successful participants in the riding school as they were the focus of conflict, and ultimately resigned their positions.

As stated above, it is clear that the majority of my participants were 'lifers' in the sense that they had planned to join the horse industry, had prior experience with horses and could not imagine not having contact with horses in the future.

4 The Job

The majority of individuals included in my research, thirteen out of seventeen, worked as grooms. Three of these individuals had additional duties as instructors. The following section explains the working day of my participants, firstly looking at grooms, followed more briefly by the instructors, the receptionist at Knightly, and the owners.

4.1 Grooms

The work of the groom focused on the care of the horse and the preparation of the horse for riding lessons. Although they came into very limited contact with clients their priority, as recognised by staff and clients alike, was the care of the horses. This priority, as I shall highlight in Chapter Six, impacted upon any interactions with clients and afforded them a distance that could not be experienced by the owners or the receptionist of the riding schools.

4.1.1 Length of the Day and Location of Work

Grooms at Knightly worked from 8am to 12pm, stopped for lunch for two hours, then worked from 2pm to 6pm. The reason given for the long lunch break was that there was a limited amount of work that needed to be completed during these hours. The two hour break did cause the grooms a degree of difficulty as they felt the break was too long to justify remaining on the site, but too short to facilitate returning home for a full lunch. The grooms therefore varied their patterns,

between remaining during the break and going home, throughout the course of the week. Grooms at Sampson worked from 8.30am to 5.30pm with an hour's lunch break at midday. The Sampson grooms also worked to a Rota in the evening; each groom would have an official 'late' day, where they would not finish work until 8pm. This did not occur at Knightly and the grooms consistently left on time at 6pm. For evening lessons, the horses to be ridden were placed in a stable by the grooms. The instructors simply then tacked them up, took them to the riding lesson, un-tacked them, and returned them to the stable. At Sampson, the evening grooms were responsible for these tasks.

4.1.2 Allocation of Stables

Each groom had a set number of stables and horses to clean and care for. For example, Abby at Knightly was responsible for only the ponies and Ella at Sampson was responsible for only the rescue ponies. Ella was quite isolated, however, and when I enquired as to whether she enjoyed this, she replied that she much preferred being around 'her' ponies and not getting involved in the negotiations in the rest of the yard.

The remaining stable blocks were allocated to a specific groom. These allocations did not normally change and the grooms were responsible for approximately ten stables each. This did not necessarily mean, however, that all these stables would contain horses. When the weather allowed, the horses were put in the fields, but at both establishments they were brought into stables when needed for lessons. When horses were used for evening riding lessons they stayed in the stables overnight. Horses may have also stayed in a stable for medical reasons. Therefore, whilst one groom may come to work to find they only have a few horses to care for, another may find they have ten horses to care for. Workload was not generally shared and each groom only completed the stables they were allocated. If one groom completed their stables before the others had finished they would usually begin sweeping the yard. When the yard was short of grooms, or on a groom's day off, the other grooms took care of the missing member of staff's

stables. Generally, all grooms would muck out at least five or more stables per morning.

4.1.3 Daily Routine

The grooms had a routine, which did not vary on a daily basis. The structure of this routine was common between the two riding establishments. The routine was guided by the needs of the horses and the timings of the riding lessons.

Generally, the routine was as follows:

- Arrive at the yard and feed stabled horses
- Fill up the horse's water buckets
- Hang hay nets in stables for horses to eat
- Take horses out to the field that are no longer needed
- Bring in from the fields any horses required for lessons
- Muck out (clean) stables
- Sweep the stable blocks

The above usually took place in the morning. After lunch, the routine continued:

- Check horse's water buckets
- Skip out (take out soiled bedding) the stables
- Tacking up horses for lessons (put on riding equipment)
- Cleaning and tidying up the yard
- Fill hay nets
- Tidy the muck heap (Sampson only)

The afternoon also gave the opportunity to complete 'ad hoc' tasks such as:

- Topping up the water troughs in the fields
- Attending to medical issues
- Grooming and clipping the horses (brushing and shaving)
- Laundry
- Tack cleaning

Before the grooms finished for the day, they would set up the yard for the night, this included:

- Skipping out the stables
- Putting rugs on horses if needed
- Feed the horses
- Top up the water buckets
- Hang hay nets for the horses to eat from overnight

There was no real variation in this routine either daily or between establishments. If pushed for time the grooms would fail to skip out and top up water buckets after lunch. I rarely saw yard staff have enough time to engage in 'ad hoc' tasks at either yard. The essential tasks, which focused on feeding the horses, preparing for lessons and initially cleaning the stables, took priority.

The daily routine was something that was perceived, by the participants, to be present in every equestrian yard. Nusser, in her study of a competition yard in America also highlighted the immovability of the daily routine. She states,

Chores follow the exact same order every morning. With military precision, the horses are fed and turned out, stalls mucked, water buckets scrubbed and refilled, trunks and stall surfaces dusted, doorways swept, and finally a Zamboni-like vacuum is run over the rubber mats in the aisle (2004: 8).

The grooms at Sampson and Knightly, although without the labour saving benefits of a vacuum, similarly followed the same chores every morning. Even the relative newcomers such as Paul and Fiona knew, within a very short period, exactly what was expected of them through the day, and what tasks they were required to complete.

As well as a daily routine, the riding schools both worked to a yearly routine. This routine was based on the weather and the condition of the fields. During the

winter, the horses mainly lived in the stables as too many horses in the fields could damage the grass. As the fields dried out and grass began to grow, more horses were put out during the day. Then as the weather warmed, they could be left out overnight. The amount the horses were left out depended greatly on the type of horse. The ponies at Knightly and the rescue centre ponies at Sampson were out in the fields as often as possible, and left out overnight as soon as spring started. The horses, and especially the horses that were used for competition, were kept in from the fields for longer and only left out overnight once summer had arrived. Not only were the larger horses less able to keep themselves warm (they often had their coat partly removed in order to prevent them from overheating when exercised), but they were more likely to damage the fields.

Ultimately, the grooms were entirely responsible for the daily care of the horses. It was their responsibility to ensure they were kept clean, fed and in good health. The grooms were usually the first to spot any medical or behavioural problems and were expected to report these to either the yard manager at Sampson, and Abby (as the most experienced groom) or Karen (as the owner's daughter) at Knightly. Again, as Nusser states,

The grooms are to the horses what the combined services of physical therapist, manager, counsellor, assistant and chaperone would be to an NBA star (2004: 15).

4.1.4 Physical side of the job

As alluded to above, the grooms in my research had a very physical job. All tasks involved physical activity. In order to muck out, the grooms manipulated piles of horse dung (excrement) from the floor of a stable to a wheelbarrow using a fork. Every morning there could be up to ten piles of dung to be removed from each stable. The grooms would then remove all wet stable bedding which was made of either straw or wood shavings. The full wheelbarrow would be taken to the muckheap, which at both sites was approximately ten metres away from the stables. Grooms would then use a fork to throw the waste as high and far back

onto the muckheap as they could manage. This initial process of mucking out process was completed, by the grooms, with one short break if they had time. Although both riding schools' muckheaps were on a trailer, Sampson's muckheap was considerably larger than Knightly's. This meant that the grooms at Sampson had to spend additional time tidying the muckheap in order to maximise the space available. Usually, this entailed using a fork to move piles of muck from the front of the pile, to the rear and top of the pile and was a very physically demanding task.

As well as mucking out, the grooms were engaged in carrying full buckets of water, often two at a time from the taps to the stables or filling hay nets. To fill hay nets the grooms would pull the hay from a bale and force it into a net. Bales of hay were often stacked up on top of each other in the hay barn. In order to open a new bale a groom would be required to climb up to the top of the pile (sometimes up to five metres) and use their body weight to push a bale to the floor. This was entirely sanctioned by the owners of the riding school and was perceived as a normal and essential task. Although, on one occasion, I witnessed a groom at Sampson expressing some nervousness at climbing the bales, it was a task usually approached with bravado, speed and skill.

In addition, the grooms walked to and from the fields to collect and return horses. This resulted in each groom walking a fair number of kilometres on a daily basis simply by going to the fields. This task was no easy walk, either. Horses being led from the fields often needed encouragement to leave in the forms of pulling, dragging, 'whooping', or the occasionally hit on the rump with a rope. Horses being led back to the fields often became over-excited, putting the groom in danger of being dragged, stepped upon or run over by the horse in its enthusiasm. There were also occasions when a horse, or pony, simply did not want to be caught from the field. Grooms would then be left to follow the horse through the grass, sneaking towards it at an oblique angle, in order to almost 'trick' it into being caught. All this amounted to more and more physical work.

The task of grooming a horse also involved strenuous exercise. Grooms would pass a brush repeatedly and vigorously across the horses coat, removing as much dust and mud as possible. The horse's feet also had to be cleaned and this was achieved by the picking up and holding of each hoof to allow it to be cleaned with a metal pick. Often the horses would lean on a groom, whilst the groom was holding up the horse's hoof in order to clean it out. This would result in nearly 500 kilograms of weight becoming pushed onto a groom's back. Grooming became particularly energetic on days when events were taking place on the yard and the horses were required to be looking their best. Finally, even if only done twice a day, the entire yard had to be swept completely.

The amount of physical labour involved in a groom's daily work should not be underestimated and Nusser sums this up in her research, stating,

The horses' massage therapist has shown up and, with nothing to do, she works on the grooms, whose bodies, she describes as "corpses that haven't fallen down yet". Every one of them is aching (2004: 139).

The physicality of a groom's work shall be explored further in Chapter Six. It was clear by observation, however, that the bravado of the hay bales and the overwhelming amount of physical labour contradicted the concept of a feminised work environment that the literature review implied would be present at the riding school.

4.1.5 Clothing and Appearance

Grooms were certainly engaged in physically demanding and mucky tasks. They would usually leave at the end of the day covered in dirt and this situation was, to an extent, reflected in their general choice of attire. Grooms either wore jeans or jodhpurs (riding trousers) whilst on the yard along with t-shirts and jumpers. Footwear was wellington boots or 'muckers' (small rubber boots). Clothes were generally dark and well worn. Becky, at Knightly, was the only groom I ever saw wearing makeup. She explained to me that the first thing she did when returning home was to climb, tired, straight into a bath. All of the female yard staff had long

hair, permanently pulled back into ponytails. Paul, the only male groom, dressed in an identical style to the female grooms, jeans and wellington boots, thus minimising any casually observable differences between him and the others. The choice of clothing of the grooms contrasted noticeably with Hochschild's (1983) flight attendants who were required, by their employers, to meet strict appearance codes. The grooms were not formally assessed in terms of their adherence to a visually perceived feminine 'ideal'. Although this could be perceived as a contradictory finding considering the overly sex-segregated structure of the industry, I would argue that the 'functionality' of the groom's attire served to buttress the high value placed upon the relationship with the horse.

Whether a groom chose to wear jeans/wellington boots or jodhpurs/muckers also reflected the relationship the individual had with their work. Jeans and wellington boots were non-horse specific attire and could either be purchased cheaper, or were items a groom already possessed. Jodhpurs and muckers were attire that could only be worn when engaging in horse-related activities, and were more expensive to purchase. Those grooms who wore horse-related attire were those who fit into the categories of 'lifers' and 'seekers' as outlined above. All these individuals also had career aspirations within the industry and planned to develop their career. The 'seekers' also potentially had residue wealth from their prior jobs, enabling them to purchase the equipment required. Those who wore non-horse specific attire were in the 'accident' category. These individuals had no career aspirations within the industry, and had not planned to work with horses prior to joining the riding school. The only exception to this rule was Abby at Knightly, who frequently mixed her attire and wore jeans and muckers. This was an accurate reflection of both her lack of desire to develop her career and her plan to remain working as a groom.

4.2 Instructors

In order to teach clients, Knightly and Sampson both employed instructors on a contract basis and used the services of existing members of staff. Of my research

participants Karen, Keith, Sarah, Adele and Debby taught clients. Sarah and Keith fitted instructing in with their work as co-owners of the riding school. Comparatively, Sarah taught more clients than Keith. This was probably due to the fact that her mother played a more active role in running the business than Keith's brother, meaning that Sarah had more time available to focus on instructing. Keith, however, also taught non-riding lessons specifically as preparation for the British Horse Society qualifications. These lessons took place on the yard, or in the bungalows, and involved lectures or practical demonstrations. As yard-based staff, Karen, Adele and Debby taught lessons alongside completing their grooming duties, effectively taking them from the yard for an hour at a time.

Riding lessons usually took place in one of the establishment's schooling areas. Occasionally, at Knightly, a lesson would take place in the cross-country or show jumping area in which case an instructor would stand and instruct horse-riders over various obstacles. Although some lessons took place during the week day (more so at Knightly than at Sampson) the majority of them took place during the evening or at the weekend.

4.3 Receptionist/Office Manager

Rachel, based at Knightly, was the only member of staff in my research employed to run an office. She worked slightly fewer hours than the yard staff, starting at 10am, took a one-hour break at midday, and finished her day at approximately 6pm. Whilst I completed my fieldwork, Rachel was working six days a week and took Monday as her day off. She was in the process of trying to find someone to replace her on Sundays. Rachel was based in reception and I only rarely saw her walk onto the yard. She was responsible for booking riding lessons; allocating horses to clients; organising events at the riding school; book keeping and dealing with any staffing issues. She also served as a line of communication between Knightly's owners and the grooms/clients.

4.4 Owners

Each establishment was owned by two related individuals. At Knightly, Keith's brother and co-owner did not partake in my research. His contact with the riding school appeared to be limited. Keith's tasks included maintenance of the site; administration; the organization of events; and some teaching. Keith could occasionally be seen walking the yard or out in the schooling areas. At Sampson, Sarah and Sheila were engaged in the riding school on a daily basis. Sheila's work focused on company administration and bookkeeping. Sarah was engaged in the yard and worked with Adele, the yard manager. Sarah also worked as an instructor and did a large proportion of the teaching.

5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have introduced some key descriptive elements of my research. I have provided detail regarding the establishments themselves, specifying the various spaces, their uses and how highlighted how they were used. From this, one can see how the different spaces were organised to fulfil different purposes that involved different participants. The most public of areas were the reception rooms. Entry to these spaces was open to all employees, the owners, clients of the riding schools and the general public. As one moved through the riding school, spaces were transformed from public to private, and access was limited from the 'outsiders to the 'insiders'. At both Sampson and Knightly the tack rooms were frequented by staff and clients (in the case of Sampson) and staff and livery clients (in the case of Knightly). These were, therefore, contested areas: staff could behave more freely, but had to remain aware that clients could enter that space at any time. The stable blocks, that housed the horses, had a mixed use which changed as one progressed further from the entrance. The entranceways were often frequented by clients, whereas the far reaches of the stable blocks were only frequented by grooms. The hay barn and fields were entirely private areas and could be used by the grooms as spaces where they could seek respite from their work. Stuffing hay nets or moving horses to and from the fields were tasks that

took time, and were physically demanding, but they were also tasks that could be embellished by the grooms. It was in these areas that grooms spoke the most freely and began to discuss their lives outside of the riding schools. The names of the fields were not written down and the horses' locations were subject to change at short notice. The names and positions of the fields was something that had to be learned quickly, by observation, and by talking to the other grooms. Lastly, the riding arenas, although used by the grooms for staff riding lesson, remained public areas. In the arena, the staff were transformed into clients and taught by an instructor in the same format that they would teach a paying client. Whilst the fields produced its own groom language, not to be participated in by the clients, the arenas generated a client language which the grooms used when being taught. Whilst clients could never 'become' staff, the staff could 'become', or 'revert' to being clients. This is, perhaps, reflective of the higher status that was given to the paying client and the format of riding for improvement relative to the status of groom.

This chapter has also introduced the key individuals and explored how they came to be working at their particular riding school. I highlighted the overt clustering by gender, and discussed the perception amongst the participants that the horse industry was vertically segregated by gender. It was also clear that the grooms were generally young, and that turnover at the riding schools was high as a result of to the short periods of time that most grooms remained employed in their current jobs. Most of the participants had had prior experience with horses, either as clients, owners, or as grooms at other yards. Additionally, the participants generally had low levels of educational attainment, with only a few exceptions, including the owner's daughter at Knightly, and two grooms. This could be representative of a broader association between grooming and social class. Although other literature has associated horse ownership with a higher social class, the horse owners at my fieldwork sites received reduced livery costs by boarding their horse at their place of work. Only one groom boarded her horse

elsewhere, and she probably also incurred lower costs as she boarded them with her mother's horses.

I have also introduced the concepts of 'lifers', 'accidents' and 'seekers' to define individual relationships to their job and shown how this is reflected in their choice of attire. Overall, the participants did not clothe themselves in any way that would be considered stereotypically 'feminine', but rather in ways that classified them as 'horsey' which was already considered feminine due to its existence within a sex segregated industry. The various tasks carried out by staff at the riding schools have been explored and outlined. It is clear that the groom's job was one that was very physically demanding, and rigid in terms of the daily and yearly routine. Their work with the horses was very skilled and afforded a degree of personal responsibility; they had to manipulate and care for very large non-human animals. None of the other members of staff (receptionist/instructors/owners) had quite the same physically intense level of workload. This was contrary to Anker's (1998) list of gender stereotypes in terms of skills, as outline in Chapter Two, which highlighted the perception that women are viewed as physically weaker than men. The physical element of the grooms' work 'should' sex-type the job as 'male', yet it is overwhelmingly dominated by women. This dichotomy shall be discussed further in Chapter Six.

In the centre of all the work and activity that took place within the fieldwork sites there remained, as ever, the horse. As highlighted in the Chapter Two, the horse's role must not be overlooked. Whilst the grooms cared and hauled, the instructors taught, the owners managed their businesses, and Rachel managed reception, what did the horses do? The 'good' horse, working steadily without complaint (Birke, 1994) was moved from the field, to the stable, groomed and given equipment to wear, ridden, fed, and sometimes hit. The horse carried riders, jumped poles, and generally (apart from occasional disagreements) tolerated what was asked of them. All the horses I saw at the fieldwork sites were healthy, and they seemed 'content'. They were well cared for relative to the grooms. Nusser

details the comparison between the life of a groom and the life of a horse. Although the following quote relates to competition horses, and details an observation made at a horse event, the similarities are clear. She states,

Now, huddling together sharing a wet burger, they [the grooms] look like a newspaper photo of mudslide survivors: dirty, wet down to their underwear, hungry, their clothes and hair plastered to their bodies...The horses, on the other hand, are napping peacefully in Blue Thunder [the horse lorry], their bodies as warm and snug as potbellied stoves under their wool coolers. They've had hay in front of them all day, and Orlando [a groom] has been around at regular intervals with a bucket of fresh water for them to drink from or just imperiously splash their lips in while he waits (2004: 99).

Whilst the horses in Nusser's study were almost pampered, the grooms resembled 'mudslide survivors'. Within my fieldwork sites the same observation could be made. Whilst the horses were warm, fed, and dry, the grooms were dirty, muddy, and tired. The status of the horse, in this respect, was far higher than the status of the groom and it was the horse's needs that took priority. A key theme of the above chapter is homogeneity between the two riding schools and a perception that that homogeneity extended to the rest of the horse industry. This homogeneity of job role and participation, however, could not be considered overtly 'feminised'. Grooms were not like primary school teachers, flight attendants, or even nurses. None of these 'feminised' professions contain the same level of hard physical labour, risk taking behaviour and disregard for personal appearance that could be observed in the work of a groom. Therefore, one can ask the following question: how is the occupation of a groom so overtly feminised when the role can be considered partially masculinised, or at least, gender neutral? The literature, reviewed in Chapter Two, regarding occupational segregation enabled me to frame this question in three specific ways. Firstly, what were the routes into the riding school sector, and how were these valued? This question shall be explored in Chapter Five and will allow me to develop the categorization of individual

relationships to the industry upon entry to the fieldwork site. Secondly, as I shall ask in Chapter Six, what skills are highly valued within the riding school sector? I shall frame this in terms of what the participants consider to be a 'good horseperson'. Thirdly, in Chapter Seven, I shall explore at issues of conflict to ask which behaviours which were supported and those which were sanctioned. This will also reveal further, insightful information, regarding the negotiations of status and how this relates to the 'ideal' skills of the horse person. Throughout, I shall be questioning how the participants framed the concept of gender how it impacted upon levels of participation. The following chapters will therefore demonstrate how gender, within the context of the riding school, was a very complex social construction that was founded on the expectation that the needs of the self were subjugated to the needs of the non-human animal. It was this 'female skill' that greatly influenced the sex-typing of the industry and other 'less feminine' skills, such as physical labour, were less influential.

Chapter Five: Getting the Skills

1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall use data, presented by individuals at both riding schools, to outline how the groom's skills had been acquired. I have categorised the different processes of skills acquisition as methods of 'formal' and 'informal' learning. Formal learning can be defined as training that involves the progression towards a recognised qualification. The training for a qualification can take place within a dedicated college, or at a commercial horse yard. Informal learning includes having a family history of horses; childhood or prior practical experience with horses; 'on the job' training; and 'natural talent'. At the end of this chapter, I shall also look at the career aspirations of my participants.

2 Formal Learning

The qualifications discussed by my research participants included British Horse Society (BHS) qualifications, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and the Higher National Diploma (HND). In total, seven individuals were studying towards a formal qualification. Of those, two were employees and five were working pupils that received a student's bursary from the riding school, as opposed to a full wage. At Knightly, Abby was pursuing an NVQ qualification whilst working full-time at the riding school and Chloe was completing a six-week period of work experience based at Knightly as part of a college-based HND qualification. Five individuals, all based at Sampson, were working towards their BHS qualifications and four of these were students who worked full-time at the riding school. These were Beth, Debby, Fiona and Carol. They received a student's bursary (reduced wage) and were categorised as working pupils instead of employees. Adele, at Sampson, was also studying for her BHS qualifications and worked full-time as the yard manager as an employee. Sampson paid the examination fees for all those taking

BHS qualifications. Knightly did not have this additional expense as the UK government paid both Abby and Chloe's fees.

2.1 BHS Examinations

The British Horse Society has its own examination structure, which they state is internationally recognized¹⁷. The exams progress through four 'stages', each of which is split into a riding and horse care element. After completing the stage two examinations, a student can sit a teaching exam (preliminary teaching test or PTT). After achieving their stage three exams and the required number of teaching hours, the student is then classed as a BHSAI (BHS Assistant Instructor). Once all four stages have been completed, the student can continue to BHSII (BHS Intermediate Instructor), BHSI (BHS Instructor) and FBHS (Fellow of the BHS). Currently, only 53 people in the UK have FBHS status. The BHS is also a non-statutory regulatory body¹⁸, approving riding schools, training centres (for BHS examinations) and livery yards. BHS examinations are held at a BHS approved riding schools, which have additionally achieved approval to become a BHS training and examination centre. Knightly is an approved BHS training and examination centre and Sampson is purely an approved riding school. Staff at Sampson, therefore, had to take their BHS examinations at a different centre.

Activities related to the BHS qualifications system correlated with the school's specific status as either an approved riding school, or training and examination centre. At Knightly I witnessed one BHS examination day and a number of different clients actively engaged in BHS examination training. Although both Keith, the owner, and Rachel, the office manager, told me in their interviews that they liked yard staff to have passed their BHS stage one exam, none of the staff was actively taking their exams. Knightly yard staff did partake in staff riding lessons but not as part of BHS training. Keith, the owner of Knightly had

¹⁷ <http://www.bhs.org.uk/content/Ods-More.asp?id=1799&pg=Education&spg=Information&area=2>

¹⁸ <http://www.bhs.org.uk/content/App-Home.asp>

completed a large proportion of the BHS examination system whilst working on yards when he was younger, and was a BHSI (BHS Instructor). Keith was also qualified as a BHS examiner, but stopped examining as he felt he needed to dedicate more time to running the riding school. Karen, Keith's daughter, had completed her BHS stages one and two examinations and, whilst studying to be a veterinarian, was continuing to train and take further BHS examinations at Knightly.

BHS qualifications were viewed at Knightly in two distinct ways. Firstly, Keith and Rachel regarded them as useful qualifications for a prospective member of the yard staff to hold. Secondly, they were used to generate revenue in the form of external training and examining. A prospective groom, however, was not required to show their actual BHS qualification certificates. This undermines their real value and implies that skills could as easily be learnt 'on the job', as in advance. Active progression through BHS qualifications by grooms was not encouraged and no formal training system was in place. The grooms were clearly perceived to be at the riding school to do a specific grooming job, and any career development was not catered for. As a training and examination centre, there would have been a limited cost incurred to Knightly to train and progress the grooms through their BHS qualifications; training and examining would have taken place on site. Perhaps, as Nusser (2004) discovered in her analysis of an American competition yard, yard owners do not seek to employ grooms with ambitions to progress their own career, but would rather employ someone who would remain happy as simply a groom. As Nusser states,

She [a competitor employer] also thinks the problem [of turnover] rests with the expectations of many grooms. "They don't want to be grooms," she explains. "They want to be you"....Even Karen O'Connor [competitor and employer] acknowledges that the ideal groom is one who doesn't really want to ride, just wants to take care of the horses (2004: 108).

How essential are the BHS qualifications, therefore, in an environment where career aspiration may be perceived as a cause of staff turnover? As specified

above, Keith and Rachel preferred their employees to have achieved their BHS Stage One qualification, but it is questionable where this is really required, and whether any further progression is really desired.

The staff at Sampson, unlike those at Knightly, was actively engaged in the BHS qualification system. The students received their training for free and had their examination fees paid for them by Sampson. In return they received only a student bursary instead of a full wage. Debby had recently completed her BHS PTT (preliminary teaching test) and Adele was an AI (assistant instructor). Of the other staff, Beth had recently taken her stage one exam and the others were planning to take it in the near future. Staff at Sampson generally rode in a staff lesson every day and received a lecture (given by Sarah or Adele) once a week. As Beth pointed out to me, however, during the winter months training became more erratic as the yard workload left them with very little free time outside of the daily routine. Whilst I was present at the yard, students completed a BHS Riding and Road Safety examination and a BHS Stage One examination. The level of training and qualification obtainment, therefore, remained low. This, coupled with the high turnover of staff implied by the short employment periods (highlighted in Chapter Four), implied that students joined the riding school with limited qualifications and ceased their employment before they progressed very far through their BHS qualifications.

One can clearly see that the BHS examination system played an important, but complex, role at both riding schools. Both schools clearly differed in their remuneration of grooms: Knightly paid a salary at minimum wage and Sampson, paid a student bursary well below minimum wage. Knightly, as a BHS recognized training and examination centre, was able to command additional revenue not accessible to Sampson. It may be that Sampson, with a comparatively reduced income from clients, used the BHS system in order to pay the reduced wage to their staff, therefore reducing their cost burden. Knightly, however, relied on the BHS system to increase income and ultimately had no need for BHS qualified

grooms above Stage One. This implies that the BHS qualifications were more useful to the riding school employers in terms of their ability to set wage levels and generate revenue, than the actual skills they provided.

In the following section I shall look at National Vocational Qualifications in the context of yard-based training. Only one of my research participants engaged in this form of learning.

2.2 National Vocational Qualifications

Whereas BHS qualifications fell under the auspices of the British Horse Society, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) were administered by the UK government. The two qualifications were structured and assessed differently. BHS qualifications were gained through examination, whilst NVQs were continuously assessed by a recognized assessor¹⁹. A student taking NVQs could be based either at a college or on a private yard and could either study full-time (for example at a college) or part-time (on day-release to a college). Equine colleges incorporate yards which enabled students to be taught and assessed in one location.

Whilst doing my fieldwork, I encountered one person (Abby, at Knightly) who was actively completing an NVQ. Abby told me she disliked both the NVQs and her assessors. She explained that not only was she required to show her ability with horses, but that she also had to pass assessments in areas such as 'numeracy and communication'. She stated that she thought the NVQ was a *"waste of time"* and that she disliked that the NVQ representatives who she was in contact with. Abby felt that they were giving her more work that she had no desire to complete. Later in my fieldwork, Abby complained that she was going to receive a visit at the yard from someone relating to her NVQ. She said *"she's going to ask me if I've got loads of work done and I'm gonna say 'no'"* and added *"oh, and there's work that I have done that she said I haven't done"*. Abby explained that her assessors had

¹⁹ http://www.qca.org.uk/qca_6640.aspx

lost work she had already completed, and were asking that she complete it again. This, she found very frustrating. In terms of time available for study, Abby explained that she studied in her lunch break and was too tired to study at the end of her working day. She felt that the continuous assessment of NVQs suited her more than the examination method of the BHS qualifications as the BHS examinations would cause her to be “*put on the spot*”. This, she felt, would cause her not to be as successful in the examinations as she could be in the NVQ assessments. Therefore, in spite of her reluctance to participate in the NVQ qualifications, Abby was aware that these were a method of career development more suited to both her lifestyle and style of learning. Her training choice highlighted an inequality inherent in the BHS system in terms of the examination process. Only those who could perform ‘on the day’ would be successful in the BHS qualification environment.

National Vocational Qualifications were viewed negatively by Sheila (the owner of Sampson) who expressed disgust when I asked her about them: “*don’t mention the NVQ to me, I feel very strongly about NVQs, about them being an absolute waste of time, government money and everything else*”. Sheila went on to explain that NVQ qualifications were not recognised abroad, whereas the BHS system was internationally recognised and well respected in other countries. This afforded a groom with BHS qualifications the opportunity to gain experience abroad if they so chose. Sheila also felt that ethos behind the NVQ was simply “*paperwork, paperwork, paperwork and more paperwork and write it all down dear*”. She explained that an NVQ assessor would visit a student and photograph them completing various tasks but complained that,

How on earth is that going to tell them [the assessors] whether or not they [the student] can do it properly? We’re not going to give them a horse that’s difficult are we? No.

In other words, Sheila felt that it was too easy to manipulate the NVQ assessments in order to ensure a favourable outcome for the student. This is contrary to the

student perspective of Abby, above, who preferred the continuous nature of the NVQ assessments. Lastly, Sheila felt very strongly that the NVQ assessors did not have the experience themselves to be able to assess others. She explained that she had had disagreements with them regarding the different methods of handling a horse and stated,

They [the NVQ assessor] would say ‘but this is [wrong]’...I said ‘yes, but that [the NVQ assessor’s method] is how the book would do it, that horse isn’t doing anything by the book’. You’ve got to know that horse, respect that horse, then do it, they [the assessors] don’t tend to do that.

Sheila’s complaint, therefore, was that the NVQ assessor’s methods were sometimes inappropriate with regards to some horses, which called into question the validity of their form of codified knowledge. A criticism regarding the quality of one’s horsemanship was, as highlighted by Nusser, “*the most egregious criticism one rider can level at another*” (2004:152).

In sum, although only a small number of research participants encountered the NVQ qualification system, comment remained mainly negative. When discussing formal methods of learning individuals tended to focus more on the dichotomy of college-based learning versus yard-based experience. In the following section, I shall look at college-based training. Only one research participant engaged in this form of learning.

2.3 College-Based Training

Colleges offer a range of qualifications focused on the horse industry. These include First and National Diplomas, National Vocational Qualifications, BHS Qualifications and Bachelor Degrees. Colleges have their own yards based on site, and the horses on these yards are used to train the students. Students are able to both practice their skills on the college yard as well as partake in classroom-based learning. Whilst completing my fieldwork I came across one person that was engaged in college-based training. Chloe was completing a

National Diploma and was at Knightly for a six-week period of work experience as a groom. During her interview, I asked Chloe about the differences between her college yard and Knightly. She explained that there were real differences in terms of health and safety. Chloe used an example of Abby leading eight ponies from the field at Knightly and explained that this would happen at her college. She explained that at the college yard, whenever you had any contact with the horses, a student had to wear a hat and gloves. Only one horse at a time could be led between different locations. Chloe explained that her own behaviour changed depending on which yard she was working at: whilst at college she would abide by the 'rules', but at Knightly she would lead more than one horse at a time without the use of a hat and gloves. When I asked her what the staff at the college would think of Knightly in terms of safety and she stated *"if they weren't at [college] and had to make sure the students did it, I don't think they'd care either"*. Chloe's perception, therefore, is that the staff at the college also perceived the rule-based method of dealing with the horses as unnecessary. If the staff does not believe in the method of handling horses, one has to question why they are attempting to teach students these same methods.

Chloe felt that a higher concern with health and safety, shown by staff at the college, had a negative impact on the horses. She explained that at Knightly,

It's much more relaxed and the horses are all much calmer and much happier in their boxes [stables] and stuff. I think the ones [horses] at college are all, like, hate the fact that you go in the box. You have to tie them up so they have to move away from whatever they're doing to be tied up, and stand there whilst you muck them out. Then you have to undo them and then you do them up again if you're grooming, and undo again and do them up for tacking up and they have to stand there and stuff. I just think they're in too much of a false, like, environment because nowhere else is like that and, I dunno, I don't think the horses are as relaxed as they could be.

This idea of the unreal yard had an impact on Chloe's perception of the quality of the training she was receiving. She explained that she received more "*hands on*" experience at Knightly and that,

At college, you just get shown how to do it, but you don't actually do most things, you don't actually have to do. Whereas here you have to [give] wormers [medication to horses], you have to trim the horse, hog [clip] the horses and things like that. At college you do have to do it, but most of the time it's done by someone who they think's gonna do it much better than you. So you don't get as much practice, it is, like, [at Knightly] if you do it wrong it doesn't matter, just do it.

Chloe describes college students as only having limited opportunity to carry out the more complex yard tasks. The college may only consider a student 'qualified' to do a certain task whilst recognizing (by using certain individuals to carry out tasks) that they do not have the ability to complete it to a required standard. The college reinforces the idea that the college yard is not a 'real' yard, but merely a 'presentation' of a yard.

Chloe highlighted her own yard-based experience and stated that it would give her an advantage over a college graduate with no other experience. She explained,

I think a lot of people don't look highly on college things anyway. So I think a lot of people think it's just people who don't know how to do stuff. So, I mean, when I go look for jobs, I'm gonna be able to say I've worked on a yard a couple of yards since I was 11.

Chloe felt, however, that she was not unique in having yard-based experience. She explained that employers should not overlook college students as they generally do have additional experience with horses and want to remain in the horse industry. She stated,

A lot of people like me and my friend, and a lot of people on my course, have a lot of experience with horses other than just the college course. But

because people like me don't know what they want to do, it's easier to just go to that college and do something you want to do eventually.

The situation Chloe presents was one where individuals, interested in horses and perhaps having worked part-time at a yard, chose to go to college whilst deciding where they wanted to work. Whilst at college they were presented with a false environment that highlighted safety and restricted potentially unsafe or under-skilled contact with the horses. Students exiting this environment possessed a false impression of how a yard should be run as well as unpractised skills, and found it difficult to then adapt to a commercial yard. This resulted in a higher turnover of yard staff as the college students become disenchanted with what they experienced within a commercial yard.

Rachel, as office manager at Knightly, also had responsibility for employing yard staff. I discussed with her the differences between college-based and yard-based training. Rachel stated that college graduates only know *“stuff from the books”* and do not have any practical experience. She explained that when a college graduate begins working on a yard, they are not aware of what the job involves or how much physical labour is required. She stated that the college graduates become unhappy with the work very quickly and ultimately leave. This perception corresponds with Chloe's perception that the college yard is a presentation of a yard, where practical skills are not adequately taught.

Sheila and Sarah from Sampson also stated that the college environment did not reflect life on a commercial yard. Sheila stated that the college yards were like 'Barbie'. *“Barbie and her horsebox and her horse, that's how the colleges run it, it's not a real scenario at all”*. The concept of 'Barbie and her horsebox' was quintessentially 'feminine' and specified by Sheila as a misrepresentation of the industry. The college environment, therefore, was perceived as threatening the industry in terms of introducing employees that conformed to this representation, as opposed to employees who learnt their skills with horses elsewhere. As Sarah

explained, the horse industry was an environment that called for a lot of “*practical experience*” instead of qualifications. She felt that,

As an employer I would tend to employ the working people over the college even if they've got the same qualification. At the end of the day the one who has actually stuck with it and worked at it is the one who knows what the environment is like, to be in there, as opposed to the one who's been sitting behind a desk for two years.

Keith, owner of Knightly, also told me that he thought college graduates had an unrealistic impression of what working on a yard would be like. He felt the graduates expected more opportunities for riding than there was, adding,

They don't really understand the pressure that can be put on one. They don't also realise that with a horse you can't leave it in the in-tray because you're feeling ill or hung-over, it still has to be done. They think that it's a far more glamorous job than it is, and it isn't a glamorous job.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the work of a groom was very physical and risk orientated, far from glamorous, and this glamour is associated with a feminine stereotype. Neither Keith nor Sheila wanted to employ women to do ‘women’s work’, but instead wanted to employ women to do what could stereotypically be considered ‘men’s work’, e.g. physical labour, risk taking etc. This implied that it was not the physical tasks involved in the work of the groom that resulted in the sex-typing the occupation as ‘female’ but something else. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter Six the skills of ‘caring’ and ‘mothering’ played a far more important role in determining participation in the industry, than the physical tasks.

All the discussions highlighted so far have focused on the idea that a false academic environment was producing grooms that did not have either an accurate impression of what was required of them at a commercial yard, or the practical skills needed to be able to complete necessary tasks. Additionally, any positive skills or experiences a college graduate may have acquired (either at, or prior to

college) were considered as secondary to the college training. A college graduate, whether experienced or not, could therefore expect to have the quality of their training and experience viewed negatively by their employers. Whatever skills they may have were seen as a product of a flawed system that values academic learning over practical skills. Additionally, Karen explained that the college-based qualification was inappropriate in content. She stated that the qualification was,

Completely useless because you don't need people who have read books about horses, you need people who can work with them, and the only way you get that is by practical experience really.

Karen explained that college graduates were strong on theoretical knowledge but weak on practical experience, and implied that theoretical knowledge was not a requirement for a groom. This viewpoint was supported by Meerabeau and Page's (1998) analysis of nursing who state that theoretical training "*does little to prepare nurses for the sheer physicality and intimate proximity of the body work that may be involved in CPR*" (1998: 299-300). The participants specified above found that formal education did little to prepare grooms for the physical work on the yard.

This contradicts the representation of a groom by Nusser, who compared the work of a groom to a "*physical therapist, manager, counsellor, assistant and chaperone*" (2004: 15). These occupations seem more suited to 'book learning' than the grooms at the riding school, implying that there may be a difference between types of grooms depending on the environment within which they are working. Nusser's grooms were based at a high level competition yard, as opposed to a riding school. What is unknown, however, is whether the environment studied by Nusser also possessed a dislike for college-based education. As we have seen, the employers studied by Nusser certainly did not like their grooms to possess too much ambition believing it prevented them from being effective grooms.

As we can see from the above, a BHS Stage One qualification, indicating basic skills, and a realistic expectations of what the job entails (gained through previous

work experience), as well as a willingness to tolerate little career development were described as the ideal pre-requisites for a member of the yard staff.

2.4 Gender

There was a clear perception amongst the participants that vastly greater numbers of women participated in the horse industry's formal education systems than men. This does not mean that men were clustered within the systems of informal learning; it was more representative of the overall dominance of women in the riding school sector. This perception was supported by the BHS examination statistics as outlined in Chapter Two. Both Chloe, who stated that all her fellow college students were female, and Abby, who stated that only one from twenty people on her course was male, supported this perception.

The male participants at the fieldwork sites, including those who were only additional individuals, had a variety of qualifications. Paul, the only male groom, had no horse-specific qualifications, and had no intention of obtaining any. He had recently completed a limited number of GCSE qualifications. Keith, the owner of Knightly was very highly qualified in terms of BHS qualifications and was a BHS Instructor, but did not refer to any non-horse industry related qualifications. Also present at the yard, for a short period, was a veterinarian student called Peter. He explained that there were currently more women on his course training to be a veterinarian than men. He perceived that this was a new development in the industry, and that traditionally it had been dominated by men. When asked why he thought this change had occurred, Peter explained he felt that newly qualified veterinarians found themselves with a large burden of debt and that the low wage (Peter specified £25k per annum) coupled with the long work hours (he specified 100 hours+ per week) were putting men off from joining the industry. This implied that women were prepared to enter the profession in spite of these issues, and that women therefore had other motivations for joining the veterinary profession. Additionally, Knightly's farrier explained that there was an increase in the number

of women training to become farriers, and added that they although did not yet outnumber men, he believed they soon would.

The horse industry, therefore, was recognised as a site dominated by women, and the farriery and veterinarian industries were perceived as becoming feminised. This perception was supported by research from the Institute for Employment Studies on behalf of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, which found that 50% of respondents to the 2010 survey were female. This compared to 45% in 2004, 37% in 2002, and 34% in 2000 (Robertson-Smith et al., 2010). The one consistent element in the three sectors, farriery, riding schools, and veterinary surgery, was that the work being carried out revolved around non-human animals.

3 Informal Learning

As found by Cassidy, and outlined in Chapter Two, 'lads' on the racing yard learnt their skills through observation and no formal methods of instruction. This served to represent horse knowledge as something ethereal, natural or 'in the blood'. Cassidy's lads also developed a lexicon, not unlike that developed by the grooms in Nusser's study (Cassidy, 2002; Nusser, 2004). This 'insider' language could only be learnt by non-structured methods of learning, or observation. By rejecting formal methods of learning (qualifications and college courses) employers become more reliant on informal methods of learning to assess skills and select employees. Participation can then become guided by a socially constructed concept of skill, which could result in the occupational segregation of the employees (Crompton, 1990) and therefore, in this example, the grooms. In the following section, I shall look more closely at the informal methods of learning used by the grooms to acquire their skills. These can be categorised into four groups: prior practical experience; on-yard training; family history and natural talent.

3.1 Prior Practical Experience

A total of 15 from 17 research participants had some previous experience with horses that had occurred outside of their current place of work. Five individuals

had been riding horses for leisure since before the age of three, and eight individuals began between the ages of four and fourteen years old. Only four participants were comparatively new to riding, including Paul, Becky, Beth and Fiona. Becky had started riding two years previously, when her father bought her a horse. Beth had only begun riding eleven months previously, when she started working at Sampson. Paul had also only begun riding upon starting work at Knightly one month previously. Lastly, Fiona had begun working with horses one year previously whilst abroad. Participants gained prior experience through either owning a horse or working part-time at a yard. During this time, they learnt some of the basic skills of interaction and care of the horse, including the basic tasks that form the daily routine.

Prior experience was regarded as a benefit for a prospective employee. Rachel, the receptionist at Knightly, told me that an individual's previous experience with horses was more important than any qualifications. Keith, owner of Knightly, also told me he was more interested in a potential employees' practical experience of horses, than their qualifications. Fiona, at Sampson, stated that she had previously been refused a job with another riding school due to her lack of experience. This refusal was given in spite of her clear willingness to study and obtain her BHS qualifications.

A potential employee with lots of qualifications and limited experience, therefore, would be rejected in preference to an individual with experience and no qualifications. Additionally, an individual with experience and qualifications may be rejected in preference to an individual with experience, but no qualifications. As Keith stated *"I find the more qualified somebody is, generally speaking, the less employable they are"*. Keith elaborated his position, explaining that although he thought BHS qualifications were better than having no prior experience at all; other qualifications actually reduced a groom's ability to perform the job. He specified one example of an instructor who, although having adequate practical experience with horses, actually developed *"bad habits"* as a result of studying at college.

3.2 On-Yard Experience

As well as prior practical experience with horses, skills were shared between grooms whilst working on the yard. At Knightly, I witnessed Abby explaining how to do various tasks, not only with other grooms, but also to Edith whilst she worked briefly in reception. On three occasions, Abby intervened in another member of staff's task and changed the way they were working. Firstly, she stopped Paul from brushing a horse that had recently been bathed, stating it would leave black marks. Secondly, she told Chloe to use a specific disinfectant on a horse's wound, and lastly she changed a document at reception which contained a mistake, aiding Edith. Abby was not the only example of directly sharing skills at Knightly. Paul told me how Becky had helped him when he had started working at Knightly. She had shown him how to muck out and how to handle the horses. The sharing of skills on the yard followed specific rules of status. These rules were revealed during incidents of conflict, which I shall discuss further in Chapter Seven. As one can see from these examples Abby, who had been employed at the yard the longest, was able to guide other 'newcomers' in their tasks.

Ultimately, the grooms appeared to learn their specific work tasks mainly by observation. For the majority of staff this process was simply one of adapting their existing knowledge of tasks (gained from previous experience) to fit in with their specific riding school routine. Becky stated that she had learnt the greater proportion of her tasks by observation. She explained that she was not told how to carry out her tasks and she explicitly stated she had received no training when she started her job. She elaborated, explaining that after two weeks of working at Knightly another member of staff left, leaving Becky on her own to manage the horses in the morning with one part-time groom to help her in the afternoon. Beth stated that when she started working she *"kind of just got on with it"*. She explained that she did not really get any training or help from the owners or other members of staff and that she just watched other people muck out a few times before doing it herself. Observation allowed not only the adaptation of existing skills to the specific yard routine, but also the opportunity to observe the skills of

those who worked on the yard in a peripheral role. As Debby, from Sampson, explained,

If the vet comes up we'll all gather round and see the vet, if we have the farrier up, we'll go and see the farrier. So it's also using your own initiative to learn what you need to learn for your job and for your exam. It is a bit of a tough lesson to learn when you first go into this kind of business, when you want to do the training, especially if you've been to college before. You, kind of, think that things get handed to you on a plate, but they don't. You have to ask, and you have to think for yourself and you have to make sure you get what you need, just purely because everyone is busy. Everyone is happy to help, but you do have to do the asking.

Learning, as described by Debby, was therefore a groom driven process. Basic skills could be acquired through prior practical experience and observation of fellow grooms on the yard. In order to progress through one's training, however, the grooms themselves had to be the motivating element. The perception was that in the college-based environment, learning opportunities were 'handed on a plate'. On the yard, however, the groom had to be self-motivated to learn. This need for the individual to be motivated to fulfil career aspirations corresponds with my earlier findings regarding the overall training of staff. Not only did employers not regard training as an essential requirement for an employee, but they also may well have participated in the BHS qualifications system for financial reasons rather than to develop their staff. The staff was being given the message that training was available, but it was their own responsibility to pursue it. As outlined in Chapter Four, the groom's work is very physically demanding, and it is difficult to imagine how a groom would find extra time to study. Without direct and active employer support it is easy to imagine how personal training goals would cease to be a priority.

3.3 Family History

All, apart from four, research participants were able to discuss a relationship between a previous generation in their family, and horses. The four exceptions were Rachel and Abby at Knightly, and Debby and Fiona at Sampson. All other participants referred to a previous generation as justification for their own involvement with horses. Keith, Karen, Sheila, Sarah, Edith, and Ella all told me that their families had owned horses and that they were riding from a very young age. At Knightly, Keith remembered having horses when he was a child. He explained that his father was the person who initially bought Knightly and began the riding school. Karen (Keith's daughter) was born into an environment already focused on horse riding. She told me that one of her first memories was of sitting on a pony that was being led by her mother. She added that she remembered both her parents teaching riding lessons as she grew up. Similarly, Sheila at Sampson told me that she had a picture of herself as a baby in a harness on her father's back, whilst he was riding a horse. She explained that both her mother and her father's family were involved in horses. Sarah (Sheila's daughter) grew up around horses and was taught to ride by Sheila. Edith's family also owned horses and had owned and bred horses at home. Lastly, Ella also grew up in a family that owned horses. She explained that she remembers having four when she was young. Now she has her own horses used to compete in an equestrian sport.

Other research participants had a more tenuous family history with horses, yet the link was still referred to in discussion. Chloe at Knightly explained to me that her mum used to ride and her aunt used to own a horse. She added, however, that she felt she did not come from a "*horsey family*". Paul and Becky, also at Knightly, initially claimed they had no history with horses, but in further discussion Paul stated that his dad liked horses and had,

a whole front room full of pictures of horses, like hunting horses, we've got like brass statues of horses, we've got cabinets full of pictures [of horses] glass cups, plates, the whole lot.

Carol also made only a limited reference to a previous generation's link with horses and referred to her grandfather whom she knew used to own a thoroughbred. Adele (Sampson) and Donna (Knightly) did not refer to a previous generation, but instead looked to their own siblings for a justification of their entry into the horse industry. Both stated that they started having lessons once their sisters had begun riding.

Lastly, Abby (Knightly) and Debby (Sampson) did not refer to their own family in any discussions regarding horses. Rachel (Knightly) explicitly explained that her family was not involved in horses and that *"as far as they were concerned what I told them was true and, you know, they believed I could look after a pony"*. She added that, as opposed to someone who had family connections with horses, she had a greater degree of freedom to engage in more dangerous riding activities. These included riding alongside dual carriageways, bareback riding and jumping. These activities, Rachel explained, allowed her to develop the skills she needed in an unstructured way. Family history, therefore, was used as a technique to 'shore up' an individual's experience with horses. The relationship between experience and knowledge, and family history was also highlighted by Latimer and Birke, in their study of horse-related culture. They stated that,

Knowledge is embodied and experiential, gained through sheer hard work and discipline, and passed on, usually down the generations, as an aspect of normal family life and the 'growing' of children (2009: 4).

This passing on of skills through the family and its relevance to demonstrating skills was highlighted by Chloe, who stated,

They've [her co-students at college] got more experience because their families are like horse related. [They have] more experience in breaking horses in, and training them, and going to all the shows. Whereas I don't go to any shows because I don't have my own [horse]

Those without the correct family history, therefore, did not have access to this easy method of demonstrating to their experience or skills. Rachel, for example, was unable to call on family history and had to refer to more 'dangerous' activities, presenting them as more valuable experiences, in spite of the lack of familial support, because of their risky elements. Nusser's findings were similar and she explained how one of her participants, a groom, found her lack of family history to be career limiting. Nusser explains,

Sam started out in her career wanting to be a competitor....With restricted finances and without the connections of horsey relatives, that goal was simply out of her reach (2004: 91).

From the above, we can see that references to historical links with horses within the family were commonly referred to by the research participants. This can be compared to what Cassidy's research on the Newmarket horse racing industry. Cassidy found that family was referred to by those research participants who were involved in what she called the 'upper class' of the Newmarket establishment. Additionally, Cassidy found herself ascribed with racing connections, in the form of Irish heritage. As she stated,

In order to be a member of a Newmarket family one must be active in racing, and if one is active in racing one may find that connections are created in order to account for this involvement (2002: 47).

As with Cassidy's research participants, the subjects in my research also clearly felt the need to discuss their family history. Even when the linkages were tenuous they were still discussed. References to family history, therefore, were also used as a method of associating oneself with the 'insiders' of the horse industry, where this is defined by Cassidy's 'upper class'. This did not mean that my participants were of high social class, on the contrary, the grooms were poorly educated and could be seen as occupying a low social class, with limited financial resources. It did imply that the participants all considered that the insider group to aspire to was one which had a strong family history with horses, and this equated to a high social

class. With the exception of Rachel, Debby and Abby (Knightly), all research participants called on this concept in order to position themselves as ‘insiders’ within the horse industry.

3.4 Natural Talent

Although infrequently mentioned explicitly, research participants did refer to the concept of ‘natural talent’. Keith at Knightly was responsible for the training of clients for the BHS examinations. As stated in my field notes,

On one occasion, I witnessed him working with a client in reception. Karen was also present and asked if she could join in with the lecture. Keith then began to ask questions to both the client and Karen. One of those questions was “what makes someone good with horses and what is ‘feel’?”. Karen replied “feel is about knowing how much pressure to put on a horse or not to put on a horse at any given time, and what questions to ask of that horse”. Keith turned to ask the client who, after stumbling briefly, stated that she thought ‘feel’ was “intuitive”. Keith agreed with the client and stated that ‘feel’ is “intuitive, natural, something that cannot be taught and something that someone is born with”.

Skill with horses was defined here as being something tactile, the ‘feel’ that a person had for the horse. Keith did not ask a question regarding how to make a horse move through the paces, or turn correctly, but rather enquired about the intangible notion of being ‘good’ and having a ‘feel’ for the horse. Karen referred to the application ‘pressure’ and the asking of ‘questions’. Although still vague in meaning, Karen’s answer could be unpicked to mean the amount of physical pressure applied to a horse in order generate a particular movement (jump a fence, begin to canter etc). This answer was rejected by Keith in favour of an answer that was as intangible as his question. Keith’s response also highlights the perceived importance of the more informal methods of learning over formal ‘book learning’. Another example of this rejection of the tangible was highlighted by Birke, who states that,

The descriptions of how animals behave that we find in scientific accounts.....go nowhere [near] explaining how both I and the horses I ride can learn a complex tactile form of communication (a language?) that enables us to do a range of athletic actions in harmony (1994: 113-114).

Birke also eschews a more codified explanation of interaction with the horse in favour of something which is 'complex' and actions that occur in 'harmony'. If one could specify, as Karen did, what was meant by the intangible concept of 'feel', then surely it could be codified and transferred as a tangible form of knowledge. This would undermine what can be observed as a clear reliance on intangible methods of learning.

Donna also referred to an innate ability with horses when discussing a prior boyfriend. She stated that he *"never really got it"* and that you either *"have it or you don't with horses"* or that *"some people get it straight away and some people take ages just to learn to trot"*. Beth also presented this viewpoint, and stated, *"you've either got it or you haven't, I think"*. The concept of natural talent, therefore, has the potential to view an individual's ability with horses as either negative or positive whilst disregarding any other methods of learning in which they may have participated.

4 A Breakdown of Participants' Methods of Learning

The following table compares the methods of learning, both formal and informal, to the participants' motivational categories. The table does not include the categories of natural talent, or on-yard experience, as these were not discussed in terms of individual methods of skills acquisition. It is important to note that, due to the low numbers of participants, these tables are merely intended to be suggestive and a useful tool for the uncovering of themes that can be explored alongside the qualitative data collected at the fieldwork sites.

	Accidents (4)	Lifers (11)	Seekers (2)	Total
BHS Qualifications	2	4	1	7
NVQ	0	1	0	1
College-Based	0	1	0	1
Prior Experience	2	11	2	15
Family History	4	8	1	13

Table six: methods of learning by motivational category

As one can see, the majority of participants had either prior experience or a family history of horses (15 from 17, and 13 from 17 respectively). All of those classed as 'lifers' and 'seekers', but only half of the 'accidents' had some prior experience. More interestingly, however, was that very few of the 'lifers' had, or were pursuing, formal qualifications. Of those that were, the majority were either pursuing, or had obtained BHS qualifications. 'Lifers', therefore, relied more on informal methods of learning, than formal qualifications, to gain the skills needed to work with horses. When 'lifers' did obtain qualifications, they chose, or were routed towards, the formal British Horse Society system. The BHS system, along with informal methods of learning, was both valued more highly and more relied upon practically. Neither the 'accidents' nor the 'seekers' had had any contact with the NVQ or college-based systems. This would imply that avenues to these formal methods of learning were in some way restricted or simply that NVQ and college-based formats were not as popular as the alternatives of either the BHS or forgoing qualifications altogether.

What the table clearly shows is that formal methods of learning are not essential requirements for participation in the horse industry and are not relied on by those who wish to remain in contact with horses for their entire lives. This, therefore, could question the current validity of formal qualifications that are obtained without providing commercial on-yard experience. This is not to say that formal

qualifications are invalid, simply that they are not being perceived as useful, nor are they being fully supported by employers on the yard.

5 Career Aspirations

In this section, I am going to look at the research participants' own thoughts about their future career. This will help us understand whether some of the possible motivations behind staff movements through the industry. Future career aspirations can be categorized in three ways: those who want to stay in the same work role; those who want to change roles but remain within the horse industry; and those who wish to leave the horse industry.

5.1 Remaining in the same role

Five research participants out of a total of seventeen expressed a desire to stay in the same role as they were in currently. These were Abby and Edith at Knightly, and Sarah, Sheila and Carol at Sampson. Although a small number in absolute terms, in relative terms it meant that nearly a third of my research participants wished to stay within the same job role. Out of the five, only Carol could be categorised as something other than a 'lifer'. As seen in the previous chapter, Carol's participation was 'accidental' as she had not planned to work in the horse industry. It was only after she experienced her original career choice of hairdressing that she decided to work full time at Sampson. Her decision to remain in the same role, however, may have been partly due to her youth: Carol told me that she simply had not considered how her career was going to progress. The other four participants were 'lififers', who had always planned to be around horses.

Abby explained to me that she had no desire to become a head groom or instructor. She stated that she preferred to *"keep to myself and my ponies"*. Abby told me how she had taught some riding lessons in the past, but that she did not enjoy it as she felt the children *"used to throw themselves off"*. She added, *"kids, I don't do kids"*. When I spoke with her further, asking whether she would like the increased wages that come with instructing, she explicitly stated that the money

would not hold any appeal adding that she “*can’t deal with*” adult lessons and “*hides*” from the adult pony camps. Abby saw herself staying at Knightly for the foreseeable future and this was partly due to her ownership of a horse, which was kept at Knightly. As a member of staff she received reduced boarding rates for her horse. Abby was fearful that if she left Knightly she would not be able to maintain ownership of her horse. Edith also felt she would not be leaving Knightly and explained that working part-time as a groom kept her busy, allowed her to have contact with people, and board her horse.

Neither Sarah nor Sheila had any plans to leave Sampson. Sheila hoped to continue co-running the riding school with Sarah until her granddaughter (Sarah’s daughter) was old enough to take over. The riding school was viewed as a family business that would continue to be owned by the family.

Overall, the only grooms interested remaining in the same position were Abby and Carol, and Carol admitted that she had not really thought about her career future at all. The majority of grooms, therefore, planned to do something else.

5.2 Remain in Horse Industry

From a total of 17 research participants, eight expressed a desire to leave their current role but remain within the horse industry. These were Becky, Donna, Chloe and Karen at Knightly, and Adele, Debby, Ella and Fiona at Sampson. Of these, five participants could be classified as ‘lifers’ one as an ‘accident’ (Becky) and two as a ‘seeker’ (Donna and Fiona).

Becky explained that although she would be happy to complete her BHS qualifications, she would prefer to train as a farrier. She, therefore, envisaged staying at Knightly for a couple of years, but no longer. Donna and Fiona both told me they would like to progress through their BHS qualifications so that they could become riding instructors. Donna stated that she viewed the instructor job as being both an increase in pay as well as a decrease in physical work. Work experience student and part-time groom at Knightly, Chloe explained that she was

considering extending her course for one more year, resulting in achieving a Higher National Diploma. She stated that although she did not *“want to be a groom for the rest of my life”*, she would like to do something that was better paid, possibly focusing on horse nutrition. Chloe also wanted to be a riding instructor as she felt it paid more. Additionally, Chloe felt that the groom’s role was repetitive and did not give her enough mental stimulation. She explained that there was a risk she would not concentrate whilst at work and this would lead to her making dangerous errors with the horses. Karen, currently studying to be a vet during term time, explained that when she graduates she would like to join the army. In the army, she told me, she would be able to gain sponsorship to compete her horses. Karen ultimately felt that she would like to continue her contact with horses as a hobby and that working as a vet would pay enough to enable her to do this. She added that grooms tended to be *“working class”* as *“basically you have to be a grafter if you’re gonna keep a job like this”*.

Adele, the yard manager at Sampson, stated that she was planning to complete her BHS qualifications and continue instructing riding lessons. Ultimately, she planned to run her own yard in partnership with her parents. Debby, currently a working pupil at Sampson, explained that she also wanted to set up her own yard, but specified that she would rather run a livery yard (the boarding of horses) than a riding school. In the meantime, she wanted to continue with her BHS qualifications, either at Sampson, or at another yard. Ella, who worked exclusively with the rescue ponies at Sampson, had no desire to complete the BHS or any other horse-related qualifications. She was considering moving away from a riding school environment into either a racing yard or a charity only yard.

All of the individuals mentioned above worked as grooms and, apart from Ella, they all expressed a desire to cease working as a groom, preferring to move into a more highly trained and paid post. Only three of the eight wanted to follow the obvious career progression for a groom working in a riding school to become riding instructors.

5.3 Leave Horse Industry

Four of the research participants expressed a desire to leave the horse industry completely: Paul, Rachel, Keith and Beth. Notably, both male protagonists wanted to leave the industry, albeit for different reasons. Paul's entry into the horse industry could also be categorised as an 'accident' but he, unlike his sister, did not want to work with horses in the future. Paul explained that he had recently applied to study construction at a local college and, as he failed his entrance exam, had applied to do an NVQ Plumbing course. Paul was, therefore, planning to leave the horse industry in order to join an industry that was clearly sex-typed as masculine.

Keith, a 'lifer' in the horse industry and owner of Knightly, specified economic circumstances as his justification for planning to leave the horse industry. He explained that the riding school would eventually close and the property would be sold as separate lots. He planned to begin this process once his children had finished university. Keith definitely did not see any long-term future for Knightly. Personally, he stated that he would continue to own his own horses, but as a hobby or for competition only. He would, therefore remain a 'lifer' in terms of his contact with horses, but he would play no further role in the industry.

Rachel, the receptionist at Knightly, was also uncertain whether she would remain in the horse industry. Her justifications were similar to Keith's in that she was concerned for the prospects of the riding school industry as a whole. Rachel felt that many riding schools were now closing as high insurance costs were compromising their business viability. For this reason, she felt she would ultimately have to leave Knightly and she would not choose to work at another establishment. Like Keith, Rachel planned to keep her own horses, but withdraw from the horse industry. She would, therefore, remain a 'lifer' in this sense.

Lastly, Beth, a working pupil at Sampson and an 'accident' in terms of her entry into the industry, told me she was unsure how long she would continue working at the yard. She was planning to apply for a job with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) so that she could work with other non-

human animals. Three of the four participants planning to leave the industry, therefore, planned to continue having non-human animals in their lives in some way, and two specified that they would continue to own horses. Out of all the participants, Paul, the only male groom, was the only person planning on leaving not just the horse industry, but also the entire environment of non-human animal care.

6 A Breakdown of Participants' Career Aspirations

The following table detail the participants' career aspirations by motivational category.

	Accidents (4)	Lifers (11)	Seekers (2)	Total
Stay in Role	1	4	0	5
Stay in Industry	1	5	2	8
Leave Industry	2	2	0	4

Table seven: career aspirations by motivational category

The table suggests that those who entered the industry as 'accidents' are more likely to want to leave the industry than those who entered as either 'lifers' or 'seekers'. Additionally, that the 'seekers' are more likely to want to change roles, and may be less satisfied with their current role within the industry than either the 'accidents' or 'lifers'. This implication was confirmed as neither Fiona, nor Donna (the two 'seekers') remained employed by the riding school for the duration of my fieldwork.

The following table compares methods of learning with career aspirations.

	Stay in Role (5)	Stay in Industry (8)	Leave Industry (4)	Total
BHS Qualifications	1	4	2	7
NVQ	1	0	0	1
College-Based	0	1	0	1
Prior Experience	5	8	2	15
Family History	4	6	3	13

Table eight: methods of learning by career aspirations

The above table gives a clear suggestion regarding the relationship between prior experience and career aspirations. All of the participants that wanted to either stay in their current role or stay within the horse industry had prior experience with horses. Of those who wanted to leave the industry, only half had any prior experience. This implies that longevity within the horse industry is closely related to prior experience and not formal qualifications. The majority of those who had, or were pursuing, BHS and college-based qualifications wanted to stay within the industry, but not within the same role. BHS and college-based qualifications, therefore, were being used by participants for career development. The single NVQ was not being used for career development. Additionally, of those who wanted to leave the industry altogether, only half had any prior experience. Again, this suggests that prior experience is the most important factor in industry participation.

7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the different ways that skills are obtained and how those methods are discussed by the research participants. I have also outlined the career aspiration of those working at the riding schools. Overall, one can see very clearly that formal and informal methods of learning were discussed in very different terms by the participants. British Horse Society qualifications were

participated in more frequently and regarded more highly than other qualifications. Both riding schools appeared, at first analysis, supportive of the BHS system. They both, however, used the BHS qualifications system to their own advantage. At Knightly, BHS training was provided to paying clients and examinations were held at the school. Knightly was an approved BHS training and examination centre, a position of esteem. Grooms, however, were not encouraged to progress through their own training, although Keith stated that the opportunity was there if they wanted it. Any training carried out at Knightly, as in the example of Abby studying for her NVQ qualifications, would have to be pursued in a groom's own time. This would be a difficult prospect for a physically drained groom. The employers at Knightly did not encourage BHS training, simply because they did not see it as a requirement for a groom. Keith and Rachel simply wanted someone who had the skills of a BHS Stage One qualification holder, but even this was not enough of a requirement to require potential employees to show their qualification certificates. Grooms at Knightly were paid a full wage, as opposed to the students at Sampson. It correlates, therefore, that the employers at Knightly did not feel obliged to provide training, so long as their employment needs were fulfilled. At Sampson, the grooms were employed as students and therefore received a reduced student bursary. This reduced salary was paid in return for the promise of training. Grooms did receive some training and limited encouragement but the onus lay heavily on the individual to participate in valuable observation sessions. Training was something that the individual had to acquire, not something that was 'handed to them', in spite of their reduced wage. As expected, the students at Sampson made up the majority of my participants who were engaged in the BHS system.

National Vocational Qualifications and college-based training both had limited participation and were viewed negatively by most participants. Assessment methods were criticised and the lack of international transferability was highlighted. The one participant who engaged in the NVQ system did not appear to do so in order to develop her career. Rather, she stated that she was happy to remain

within her job role. The college-based yard was criticised for creating a false yard environment that resulted in both unrealistic expectations by graduates, coupled with a lack of practical skills. One way in which this false environment was conceived was stereotypically feminine: the Barbie toy 'playing' with ponies. The perception was that college graduates, who were employed by a yard, would leave after a short period. This situation would probably be exacerbated by the additional negative assessment of their skills by their employers. College experience was perceived as a 'black mark' against a prospective employee and those responsible for employing grooms explicitly stated that they required a groom with practical skills.

Methods of informal learning were also discussed with regards to prior experience with horses, on-yard experience (mainly observational), family history and natural talent. These methods were used to both demonstrate practical experience and position an individual within an 'in-group'. Examples of individuals who had limited, but not necessary no, family history and personal experience numbered only four: Paul, Becky, Beth and Fiona. These individuals were able to learn their skills for the job mainly through observation on the yard. Participants at the riding schools were far more likely to have had prior experience of horses in the form of informal methods of learning than with formal methods of learning.

Overall, it appears that the riding school sector was relying on both prior practical experience and quick observational methods of learning for the skilling of those who enter the industry. The BHS qualification system was available to give individuals the skills for career progression, but appeared not to be being used in that sense. This was partly due to a lack of employer support and encouragement of training, but also due to the high levels of turnover, which may simply prevent progression. If grooms are constantly moving from one training opportunity to the next, it is not unreasonable to assume that their training will suffer as a result. At the same time, whilst training remains the responsibility of the individual, the grooms may be more inclined to leave for better opportunities elsewhere. In terms

of the turnover levels, it is clear from this chapter that the majority of grooms do not wish to remain in their role as grooms. The majority of participants as a whole, however, want to remain in the horse industry or connected with horses in some way. The participants do not simply walk away from the horses. Although the employer in Nusser's (2004) study felt that women were more inclined to leave the industry in order to have children, the majority of participants in this thesis were so young that they had not begun, or even begun to think about, doing this.

Clearly, if training and career progression was formalised into a structure that was respected by both employers and employees, and enabled staff to increase their skills with no added cost to the employers, turnover issues may improve as motivation increased. This would also require a move away from the more intangible methods of learning.

A reliance on these intangible and undocumented methods of skills acquisition can serve to maintain a social selection of the workforce instead of a selection based of the documentation of skills. Methods of skills acquisition, coupled with the skills requirements (which I shall outline in the following chapter) can be used to maintain a gendered bias regarding participation. As Mills states,

...the most profoundly gendered strategies are those which emerge from and are supported by the mundane life of the organisation. (1996: 91)

These strategies were complex and twofold. Firstly, formal qualifications were representative of a codified level of 'skill' and, by relying on informal methods of learning, the work of a groom was publically defined as 'unskilled' and as such it becomes the domain of women (Connell, 2009). Working with horses was not always perceived as low status and unskilled (Leyser, 1995; Richardson, 1998) but the modern day masculine framework of formal methods of learning (Walby, 1997) is not applied to the teaching of grooms and this created a bias towards women. Therefore by valuing informal learning over formal learning, it could be argued that selection into the industry was already biased in favour of women at the point of entry. Secondly, formal qualifications did not automatically imbue a groom with a

type of 'authentic horsiness' that was valued by employers. An authentic 'horsiness' implied an individual who had learnt their skills through informal methods of learning, indicating that they were aware of the type of tasks that were involved in the job and willing to undertake hard labour for the benefit of the horse, thus subjugating their own needs. The valuing of informal methods of learning protected the industry from the incursion of individuals, male or female, that did not fit this definition of the 'insider'.

High turnover was a key issue at the riding schools, although grooms tended to move between yards instead of leaving the industry entirely. This appeared to contradict the assertion, made by the male participants that women would simply leave in order to have children. This male response was correlated by Nusser, who found that,

David O'Connor [competitor and employer] believes women drop out of the sport to have families and then find it impossible to return to their previous professional level (2004: 129).

There was no expectation, by the male participants, for female grooms to aspire to succeed, no perception that they would remain in their post long enough, and be determined enough, to succeed in getting qualifications. Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand why training was not supported, why pay remained low, and why turnover remained high.

This chapter has described the complex pattern of methods of learning and career aspirations that are used to define an individual's participation in the riding school sector. In Chapter Six I will look at how individuals perceived the skills required at the riding schools. This will enable me to introduce the concept of a 'good horseperson' and show how it is related to the homogeneity of my two research sites.

Chapter Six: The Good Horseperson

1 Introduction

In Chapter Five, I discussed the various methods of skills acquisition in terms of formal and informal learning, as well as the career aspirations of my research participants. I concluded the previous chapter by stating that informal methods of learning were valued more highly than formal methods of learning, and that formal methods of learning were not a requirement for employment as a groom. I explored the broader issues around the preference for informal methods of learning and how it related to women's position in the workplace. I explained that the reliance on informal methods of learning resulted in the branding of the groom's job as 'unskilled', which, due to the tendency for women to cluster in low-skilled occupations as a result of structural power inequalities, has enabled the industry's occupational segregation by sex. Additionally, that the status elevation of these methods enabled an internal structuring of the industry that rejected 'outsiders' who may lack the required 'horsiness' and/or have formal education qualifications.

This chapter shall explore how the research participants discussed the skills they viewed as essential in order to work at a riding school. This analysis, coupled with an understanding of the various methods of learning, will enable me to develop the concept of the 'ideal horseperson' as presented by the research participants. As stated by Kelan (2009), an exploration of the concept of the 'ideal' worker is a key technique in revealing gender assumptions.

The concept of the 'ideal horseperson' can be categorised into two areas: task orientated and attitudinal. Those skills perceived as attitudinal relied heavily on the management of emotions. I shall begin this chapter by analysing the practical skills, which include physical labour and the physical care of the horse. Following this I shall explore perceptions relating to interaction with the horse, detailing how this concept was intrinsically related to emotional labour. Lastly, I shall outline how

individual's perceived interaction with humans, in order to make a comparison between the emotion work carried out between humans and the emotion work carried out by humans when dealing with the horses.

2 Physicality

As demonstrated in the previous two chapters, the grooms' work was very physically orientated and previous practical experience, demonstrating an understanding of the 'hard graft' of the job, was viewed positively in potential employees. It was unsurprising, therefore, to find that the skill of physical fortitude was recognised as crucial by both those responsible for employing grooms, and the grooms themselves. Grooms were engaged in cleaning the stables; carrying water buckets; filling, carrying and hanging hay nets; putting riding equipment on the horse; grooming; and cleaning riding equipment. Leading a horse to and from the field was also physical, and a certain amount of strength was sometimes needed to determine the horse's movements. Ultimately, all my research participants were able to manage their tasks and I did not once see an individual fail to complete a task that was part of the daily routine.

Notions of physicality were not limited to work tasks, but also included injuries obtained whilst working with horses. Being involved with horses in any context is a potentially dangerous activity and many of my respondents were able to talk about injuries they had previously sustained.

2.1 Physical Capability

Karen, daughter of the owner of Knightly, stated that a groom's work demanded physical ability to complete tasks such as 'mucking out' (cleaning the stables) and that a groom needed to be generally hard working. The mucking out of the stables clearly took up the largest proportion of time, and a groom was required to do this quickly and effectively. Paul stated that the mucking out had to be completed to a particular standard and that the horse's stables must not be left in a dirty state. Donna also explained that a groom needed to be able to muck out well, adding that

a groom should be happy to “*get their hands dirty*”. Keith also talked about mucking out, stating that it was one of the basic skills a groom needed. This emphasis in the relatively simple task of cleaning the horse’s stable could have been why a number of the grooms referred to themselves as “*sh*t shovellers*”. It was a task that took up a large portion of their day, could not be avoided, was physically hard, and somewhat repetitive. The grooms did not view it as a pleasant task, and yet its priority was very high. Thus, they joked that for a living they ‘shovelled sh*t’: a self-deprecating and cynical observation of what they did.

Mucking out was clearly not the only task that required physical capability. In order to complete the range of physical tasks, Keith stated that a groom required an ‘all round’ physical fitness. Grooms were on the move all day and Adele, at Sampson, described their work as “*backbreaking work, manual labour, it is hard going*”, comparing it to working on a building site all day. Sarah stated that any potential employee needed to understand how much hard work was involved in the role. She stated “*I really try and put this across to them, I want them to realise how hard it is*”. Her mother, Sheila, agreed with this and added that she felt the job was very hard work. In this way, the grooms were similar to the horses they were paid to tend. As Birke states “*...the ‘good’ draft animal is one that works steadily, without complaint, for long hours*” (1994: 19). This is exactly what the grooms did, steadily progressed through their sets of tasks, sticking to the unalterable routine.

Although I did not observe any member of staff fail to complete a physical work task, the unending physical nature of the routine was seen, by the grooms, as the most negative element of the job. Those who were not happy in the work soon began to reduce their own pace and this was recognised, by their fellow colleagues. As Adele, at Sampson stated with regards to Fiona, a groom who eventually resigned,

She [Fiona] was happy mucking out her four [a small number relative to the other grooms] ponies, and saddling Guy and riding Guy up and down the lane. Having a lesson and doing less, and that was it. She used to come in

*and do waters and hay nets and that was about it, what's the point? If I'd have said to her: "alright you've got to go and chuck all the muck off the muck heap, and make steps. And you've got to physically move about half a ton of sh*t, and it hurts, but you've got to do it because otherwise it explodes and goes everywhere. It makes it look tidy". She wouldn't have done it, or she'd do it but she'd take all day doing it to prove a point. I do it in half an hour just to get it done.*

The perception of a 'slow down' of work pace represented a groom's overall disconnect from the work, as opposed to a physical inability to complete the actual work tasks. Physical labour was withheld as a form of resistance and, as it did in Fiona's case, could lead to the groom's resignation.

The physical labour involved in the work of a groom could be viewed in terms of Hochschild's (1983) conception of 'social exchange'. Hochschild argued that when an individual engaged in the anti-payment of a social exchange they presented a contrary response to demonstrate defiance. Fiona, by being perceived as slowing her work pace (she did not even have to slow in reality, but just had to be perceived as withholding) was interpreted as being defiant and therefore engaged in the anti-payment of a social exchange. Physical labour, in this example, was therefore a form of social exchange that could be given and received, or offered and rejected.

2.2 Injury

Respondents not only discussed the physical nature of their current job role. A number of individuals told me about injuries they had sustained whilst working as a groom or when in contact with horses.

At Knightly, Abby told me that she had a number of personal physical issues that had arisen because of her work as a groom. She explained that she had to have an ultrasound scan on her shoulder to investigate a trapped ligament, adding that her doctor stated it was caused by mucking out stables for a number of years.

Abby agreed with the doctor's diagnosis and referred to her physical work such as mucking out, pushing wheelbarrows, and heavy lifting. Harry, the handyman at Knightly, also told me about an individual he had known who, after working as a groom for ten years, had to leave because they were physically 'wrecked'. Harry felt that this was the normal outcome for grooms who remained in their role for any longer period of time.

Other participants were able to discuss injuries that had been caused by the horses themselves. Edith told me how she had been kicked in the stomach by one of her horses when leading it from a field to the stables. She had been rushed into hospital and, as a consequence, had narrowly avoided having her spleen removed. Harry also told me that he had been kicked by a horse. Donna explained that she had broken her ankle when riding at the age of sixteen years old. Adele told me that her pony had recently trampled her and that she had been afraid that she had broken her ankle. Although this was not the case she reported that it still caused her considerable pain. Adele stated that in the past she had,

broken fingers, I've broken my arm, I've sprained both my ankles very badly....I've been thrown off and put into walls, I've ended up sitting on jumps, I've had some horrendous falls, and every time I get back on. I concussed myself, but that's part of the adrenalin rush...this is a big animal with its own mind and you're taming it, it listens to you and it's doing what you want it to do.

Here one can see Adele describing injuries in an almost positive way. Being involved with horses adds to her 'adrenalin rush', as if the risk of being injured is exciting. She stated,

It's the adrenalin rush that this horse could kill you, you could die in two minutes, but you're having the time of your life.

The horse that Adele describes is something that is 'almost' tame: a wild non-human animal that, through her skill, she is able to harness and control. Birke highlights this concept, stating that,

Taming, too, is ambiguous. It can be synonymous with training animals to carry out particular tasks; it can also imply conquering the wildness in the animal. To 'tame' a horse – a symbol of power in our culture – is to subdue its wildness, to make it accede to our wishes (1994: 19).

Not only is the horse capable of acting in a passive manner - carrying riders, participating in the daily routine - but the horse is also something wild that can be conquered. Physical injuries were presented by the participants as evidence of this challenge of subduing the horse to human will. In engaging with the horse in this manner, the human must also experience some change. Birke states that,

In transforming the animals from 'wild' to 'tame', humans reconstruct the boundary between the animal and ourselves. No longer symbolic or representative of recalcitrant nature, 'taming' recasts the animal, brings it closer to our idea of humanity. It also brings us closer to nature, but to a nature more amenable to our control, thus blurring, a little, the human/animal boundaries (1994: 19).

Our relationship with non-human animals does not only transform the non-human animal, bringing them 'closer to our idea of humanity' but also transforms humans, bringing us 'closer to nature'. The groom who tames the horse, collecting injuries as they 'battle' to subdue the horse's wildness does not simply alter the horse's behaviour; they also alter their own behaviour: being injured becomes something that is acceptable, and of which they can even be proud.

Although Adele accepts and may even revel in the risks she takes when riding horses, Debby explained to me that the general public does not necessarily share the same understanding. This can lead to riding schools being sued and forced to close down. Debby stated,

riding is a dangerous sport, and anywhere I've worked we make sure that every client that comes through the door understands that you're doing a risk sport and you're taking it upon yourself to do that, because ultimately, horses are unpredictable, they're living animals, even the best trained horses, if something spooks them or scares them then they are going to do something that might unseat you or might make you topple.

Debby was also able to describe injuries to me, adding that she once fell off a horse which not only “*smashed*” her face into the floor, but also dislocated her shoulder. Like Adele, Debby emphasised the injuries she had received as a result of her contact with horses. Adele and Debby were the ‘insiders’, those who were skilled and had tamed the horse. The public, according to Debby’s perception, were ‘outsiders’ who did not understand the wildness that was within the horse. The public therefore had not made that journey towards the horse, bringing the two species closer together as described by Birke (1994). The public were therefore perceived as unskilled, whilst the grooms were skilled.

As we can see from the above, a number of my research participants were able to describe injuries they had sustained either whilst riding or carrying out their work tasks. I did not witness any injuries being sustained whilst I carried out fieldwork at either site, however. This emphasises the role that talk about injuries, as a way of ascribing an individual to a particular status grouping, was far more important than the actual act of being injured.

Physical injury was not always perceived as something that represented skill. Beth, when discussing the skills required by a groom, stated “*if you haven't got any [patience and commonsense], you're going to get hurt*”. Injuries can, therefore, be categorized in two distinct ways: as result of managing the horse, or as a result of perceived poor skills of the groom.

The high degree of physical work, and risk, involved in the job of a groom contradicted its sex-typing as a ‘female’ job. As I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, like Williams’ female marines (1989) the grooms emphasised their

'feminine' qualities of caring, encapsulated in their emotional relationship with the horse, which served to prevent the work from being classed as 'masculine'. At the same time, however, the enjoyment gained from talk about injury prevented the job role from becoming one entirely about care and emotion, or fully feminised.

3 Horse Care

As part of the groom's job the horses had to be physically cared for to an adequate standard. Not only did they need to be fed and given water but a number of participants also told me that a groom needed to be able to recognise any signs of illness. Chloe stated that a groom should have a basic knowledge of horse care adding that you cannot get it wrong because *"it's not like looking after a hamster or anything"*. Chloe stated that looking after a horse differed from looking after a hamster in spite of the fact that they are both non-human animals that can be harmed if incorrect care is administered. The horse was presented by Chloe as a far more complex biological system that demanded more knowledge and skill than a smaller non-human animal. She added that a groom needed to be able to administer health remedies including injections, tablets, creams, worming paste etc. Chloe emphasized the more technical and skilled elements of the job. It is interesting to note, however, that I did not witness Chloe herself administer any of these remedies. At both yards I observed the horses being wormed and individual horses receiving wound care. These tasks were completed by Abby, at Knightly, and Adele and Sampson: the highest status grooms. Chloe co-opted the skills: presenting them as belonging to herself, when others actually exercised them. This was especially interesting when compared to Chloe's perceptions of her own college-based yard, where she was receiving formal education, as being a 'false' environment where students were unable to practise skills such as worming. Chloe was willing to co-opt the more technical tasks that were completed at the riding school, but unwilling to do the same for her college-based yard. This implied that Chloe's negative commentary regarding the college-based yard could have been more influenced by the general negativity regarding that particular

environment than what actually happened on the yards on a daily basis. Therefore, the perception of college-based yards as creating a 'false' environment, in which students are not able to practise their skills, may be false.

Preparation of the horse's feed was also discussed as an important skill. This involved working out exactly how much a horse would need for its individual body weight and amount of exercise. Chloe explained that every horse had different requirements and required food of a specific amount and type. Sarah added that,

Mathematically, they [grooms] need to be able to work out a feed and work ration to the feeding for the horses...for feed charts, working out weights and how much hay they should have.

The feed rooms on each site contained a list, which detailed the names of horses and how much food they should have. In reality, there was no need for grooms to use mathematical skills as the required feeding information was presented to them in a chart. This chart could be followed and learnt by a groom without a complex understanding of how to feed a horse. The charts were initially created by the owners at both riding schools. Like the ability to care medically for the horse, the ability to prepare feed was presented as a skill needed by all grooms but was, to a great degree, unnecessary.

Overall, the more detailed skills that focused on the care of the horse were discussed as being essential and complex, but were not relied on by the grooms in the fieldwork sites. As Keith, the owner of Knightly, pointed out, "*you need somebody who's able to do those fairly basic skills, to be honest somebody who's about [BHS] stage one*". Skills such as working out the horse's feed requirement and administering medical care might be useful but were not required. The participants, however, felt they were able to discuss these skills as being essential, whilst concurrently remaining negative about a college environment that taught these skills. These specific skills, therefore, were valued differently depending on the context. Worming a horse at the riding school had greater status than worming the horse at a college-based yard. Negativity regarding college-based yards,

therefore, had more to do with the rejection of codified knowledge as a way of representing skill in the horse industry, than a rejection of what was actually taught at the colleges. This enabled, as highlighted by Woodfield (2000) in Chapter Two, a social selection of employees rather than a meritocratic selection. At the same time, the elevation of the status of the more technical elements of the work was similar to Simpson's male flight attendants (2004), who emphasised the security elements of the job in order to position themselves as having 'masculine' skills in a feminised workplace. Like the physicality of a groom's job, this emphasis on technical ability would, within a broader framework of occupational segregation, imply a masculine environment. This contradicts both the feminised workforce and the emotional and caring elements of the work. These more 'feminine' skills shall be explored in the following section.

4 Interaction with Horses

4.1 The Emotional Groom

A number of research participants discussed their job in terms of concepts such as 'determination'; 'dedication'; 'love'; and 'obsession'. These concepts, viewed as positive, were used by grooms to justify why people remained in the industry, in spite of the physicality of the work, the repetitiveness of tasks, and low pay, all of which were viewed as negative.

Adele, at Sampson, stated that a good groom needed "*dedication*". Sarah stated that a groom needed to have "*determination to work through problems when they arise and not to get too downtrodden if things aren't going their way*". Debby told me that a groom needed to have a lot of determination and stated,

If you actually want to do any qualifications or pursue horses as a career, then like anything, you have to put the work in. You have to, otherwise it's just not going to happen, otherwise I wouldn't still be here.

A skilled groom was, therefore, perceived as requiring determination and dedication to remain in the job role, no matter what problems may potentially occur. These skills were remarkably similar to those outlined by Anker as being associated with women including less likelihood of complaining about work, working conditions; greater willingness to do monotonous/repetitive work; and a greater willingness to accept lower wages (1998: 23). The research participants also talked about the horses in terms of a 'love' that they felt for them. Edith told me that working with horses was different to working in an office because "*you can't build a relationship with a computer*". This was comparable to Chloe's early comments that separated the technical element of caring for the horse from the care of a smaller non-human animal. Horses were not only complex biologically, but they were also recipients of human 'love'. Edith felt that people who work with horses get very emotionally involved with them. When I asked her to elaborate, she replied,

I think to work with horses over any length of time you've got to have a deep love for them because it's not a glamorous job, my hands are so rough in winter I can't bare the sight.

Edith went on to compare her work as a groom with previous work she had carried out as a flight attendant. She believed that people went to work as either a flight attendant or a groom believing it was a glamorous job, when in fact both were physically hard work. This, clearly, draws a parallel with Hochschild's analysis of flight attendants. Edith referred to the 'catcalls' she used to receive from men whilst riding a horse, explaining that 'outsiders' did not understand how physically demanding and dirty her working with horses actually was. When on top of a horse riders were perceived, by men, as glamorous, and flight attendants were also presented as glamorous in Hochschild's research. Both roles were socially sanctioned and supported presentations, or social constructions, of women and not representative of the reality of the work. The key difference was that the grooms were working with horses; the men on the ground were merely observers, not the

recipients of any emotion work. How men, 'catcalling' from the sideline, felt about the riders was of no real commercial relevance, whereas there was clear commercial gain to be had from the glamorous presentation of flight attendants. Flight attendants may have been motivated toward their jobs because of the glamour of flight and travel; grooms were motivated by their feelings for the horse. But, as stated above, the horse was not a computer, it was a living and reactive being, therefore the emotional work carried out by the grooms was far more complex, as I shall demonstrate below.

There is no doubt that the participants in my research felt a very strong positive emotion towards the horses. Sheila discussed the relationship she had with horses, and stated,

you know how we look after our horses, they come first, second, third, everything, the animals come first and if I have to go without food and like on baked beans for a week because we're short of pony nuts, well that's fine, they come first.

Sheila described herself as being dedicated to the horses at the detriment of herself. This viewpoint was similar to an informant within Latimer and Birke's research, who stated,

In some households, horses come first, children second, their yard will be immaculate, as will the horses, but the house will be filthy and there's no food in the fridge (2009: 12).

The 'filthy house' or, as in Sheila's case, the meals consisting of baked beans were visible demonstrations of the amount of 'love' the individuals had for the horse. These were no simple descriptions of emotion-free relationships with non-human animals but, rather, vivid descriptions of emotion-laden relationships with living and interacting horses. Research participants clearly formed an emotional bond with the horse. Yet, there was variation in terms of how this emotional bond was

performed. Sheila described her feelings towards the horses in the following terms,

You have to have a complete affinity to horses. I mean, I adore them, I love them, I've loved them since I was a baby, to me a horse, I don't know what it is, there's just something about them and me.

She appeared overwhelmed with her strength of feeling towards the horses; however this strength of feeling was not confirmed through my observations. Sheila was rarely present on the yard, and when she was, she mainly interacted with the staff. Her love for the horses, however, was vocal and certainly had meaning for her when she was describing it. Sheila was the most vocal individual with regards to this emotion, and it is arguable that her exuberant talk was a reflection of her lack of physical contact with the horses. As she was not able to perform a physical social exchange, she was required to demonstrate her 'love' vocally. Even the owner of Sampson, therefore, felt the requirement to engage in emotional labour.

It would be incorrect to present the emotional response of 'love' as simply a skill that was described by research participants with the purpose of justifying their continued participation in a physical and low-paid job. The research participants appeared to enjoy actual interactions with the horses, but interactions were not always positive and a vast amount of talk and behaviour was negative. Like the Hochschild's flight attendants whose idea of flight and travel may have motivated them to join the industry, the reality of tired and troublesome customers soon took the shine off the glamour.

A number of individuals explained that women worked with horses because they had a need to 'care' or 'mother' another living being and three individuals specifically drew a comparison between the ability to care for children and the ability to care for horses. The perception of an ability to care for the horse, as if it were a child, was also consistent no matter whether the individual had their own children or not. Edith, an older part-time groom, explained that,

I've still got something to mother, to look after, some reason to get up in the morning. I've got to feed my boy [horse] and get my horse out. Some of it could be that we just love looking after things more than men; most men just want to ride, get on and not even a pat. I think a lot of it is that women need something to cherish and care for and love especially when the family's grown up and gone you can put all your affection into my animals the dogs and the horses.

Edith drew a distinction between a woman's 'need' to cherish and care, and a man's desire simply to ride the horse. Women were therefore presented as having emotional foci and characteristics, and men as having practical or functional foci and characteristics. Edith also described an element of replacement; her horses were replacing the absent family. As stated by Arluke and Sanders (1996), the horse is not simply an object, but a socially constructed and meaningful participant in an interaction. Having an absent family, however, was not the only criterion by which an individual could justify a parental type of relationship. As Becky, a younger and childless groom, stated, *"it's like having a child, having a horse"*. The horse was viewed by Becky as a substitute child and this relationship could be used as justification for not having a child. As Adele stated,

I'm two months from 25, I don't want children at the moment, I don't have the need for it because my baby is Willow, she's got four legs, a tail and a mane, I'm happy, she spends all my money and then walks all over me, literally.

As in Anker's text (1998), the ability to 'care' was treated as a female characteristic, expressed towards a replacement child both prior to, and after, any actual experience of a mother and child relationship. Those grooms in my research were not actively engaged in the role of mothering and the horse was a substitute. This is comparable to how Franklin views the human relationship with domestic non-human animals more generally. He states that,

Pets are acquired to become substitutes for a number of human relationships: to replace deceased partners; in place of children, loved-ones and friends, and, for many children, in place of siblings and parental company during work hours (1999: 84).

The relationship between the individuals and the grooms is one that is clearly perceived as being maternal. Only three participants at either riding school were actively caring for children at the time of my research: Rachel, the receptionist at Knightly; Keith, whose children were at University and Sarah who had two primary school aged children. The majority of participants were female and childless (or in Edith's case the parent of adult children) and this was partly due to the youth of the majority of the grooms. They had not had children, and the horses were their substitutes. This perception of the relationship with the horse as being like mothering a child was similar, again, to Hochschild's flight attendant. Hochschild outlines how flight attendants were taught to 're-conceive' a difficult passenger as a child in order to make them more acceptable. The grooms in this thesis, however, were not formally taught how to engage in this re-conception. Conceiving the horse as like a child was reflective of how the work of the groom was an acceptable extension of normal household tasks and, as highlighted in Chapter Two, this process is fundamental to the occupational segregation of the workplace (Phillips & Taylor, 1980; Davidoff and Westover, 1986; Bottero, 1992; Dumais et al. 1993; Anker, 1998; Grint, 2005; Woodfield, 2007; Connell, 2009). Crucially demonstrative of the gendered aspects of the groom's 'love' for the horses was that Keith, the owner of Knightly, did not once frame his interactions with the horses in terms of 'love' or any other emotion. It was not a requirement for his gender.

Although not one of the females in my research stated that a woman's engagement in the role of motherhood was a hindrance for their career in the horse industry, two male participants thought it certainly was. The farrier stated that some male farriers do not want to take on female assistants. He explained that this was

because female farriers did not remain in the industry but instead left, upon completing their training, to have children. He reported that his own female assistant, once trained, would probably work part-time whilst caring for children and use farriery as an extra source of income. He explained that the farriery industry needed people to dedicate a lifetime's career in order to help progress the overall industry. Women would not be able to do this, as they dedicated time to care for children. Keith, the owner of Knightly, also stated that, although women dominated at the level of grooms, their failure to progress in status was due to their exit from the industry in order to care for children. The female participants, however, did not echo this opinion. On the contrary, the lack of career development experienced by female grooms was justified, by one groom, in terms of the necessity to 'care' for the horses. As Karen stated,

There's not enough room to be competitive really [as a groom] and you have to really care about the horses so I think that's probably why there aren't that many men.

Caring and competing were presented as oppositional. In order to successfully care for the horses, the groom had to dedicate all their time to the task, leaving them unable to focus on competitive riding. This was contrary, however, to the finding by Nusser (2004) that grooms were perceived as being motivated to become competitors. It was more likely that women were simply not given the opportunity to compete in the same way that men were. Again, Nusser when talking to a groom at an American competition yard, found that,

...the owners of the horses, unlike the horses themselves, have gender preferences. "Karen is just as established as David is," Sam says. Yet David "always gets the catch rides on the horses. Always" (2004: 129).

As explored in Chapter Four, vertical occupational segregation was a perceived reality, with men dominating at the higher levels. Cassidy (2002) found this also within the racing industry. It is clear that the broader themes of occupational segregation are relevant in the analysis of this issue. Women were perceived as

having different skills, focusing upon the caring and mothering of the horse. Those that displayed stereotypically masculine skills on the yard were, according to Cassidy, perceived as 'brash', i.e. negatively. Cassidy also highlighted that women were seen as physically not able to cope with a stronger horse. This was merely a perception, however, as the female grooms in this thesis were physically able to complete all the tasks given to them and, as demonstrated above, even revelled in the more risky elements of the work. The perception of the skills of the female groom therefore contradicted the observations made at the site, highlighting the socially constructed nature of assessments of the groom's skills and its dependence on a broader perception of the skill sets of women. Women were, therefore, clustered into what was perceived as the 'caring' part of the industry: the groom's work. This, coupled with the perception of the groom's job as low-skilled, and low-paid, caused the job to become ascribed to women. As stated in Chapter Two: "skill becomes *"defined against women"* and skilled work becomes *"work that women don't do"*" (Phillips & Taylor, 1980: 86).

When one takes into account the concept of the 'second shift' (Hochschild, 1989) the situation becomes even clearer. Although the young grooms at the riding schools had not necessarily yet conceived of having children, it was clear that the men automatically ascribed to the idea of the second shift. Having children would damage a female groom's career because it was the female that would take on the responsibility of raising the children, not the man. The groom's job, with its long hours and physically draining characteristics, would leave little time or energy for other caring responsibilities. Grooms do not get flexible working options, or coherent maternity provision. Additionally, due to the risky nature of the work as a groom, a pregnant woman would be required to limit her contact with the horses. The negative attitude towards pregnant grooms was highlighted at Sampson. A new groom was employed who, during her first day, admitted to Beth that she was pregnant. Beth declared that the new groom would have to tell Sheila, and if she refused Beth would inform her herself. The new groom refused to tell Sheila and Beth went ahead and informed on her, she perceived the situation as too serious to

hide. The new groom was soon called to Sheila's house and asked not to return to the riding school. Grooming horses and being pregnant are uncomfortable partners and this had a big impact upon the average age of the grooms.

4.2 Ground Skills

All yard staff had daily contact with horses that demanded an ability to interact with and manipulate a horse from the ground. These skills were used when a person was moving a horse around a stable in order to muck or skip out; when leading a horse to and from the field; and when putting riding equipment on a horse.

Research participants were expressive when describing how one should interact with the horse and these behaviours included calmness, patience, confidence and boundary setting. Debby explained that horses were instinctive beings and, when afraid, their reaction was to run. Having good horse interaction skills implied that the individual had prevented the horse from reaching that point. This was done, as Paul explained, by ensuring that one did not rush towards the horse and more specifically its face. Paul added that an individual had to remain quiet around horses and not make any loud and sudden noises. Debby explained that horses could also sense fear in an individual and that,

It's about making sure that with the way you stand, the way that you position yourself, the way that you hold yourself, is confident so that the horse at least thinks that you are confident and that you are sure of yourself.

Participants also explained that a groom needed to have patience with horses so that when things went wrong they did not get angry and frighten the horse, which would result in the problem not being resolved. Adele, at Sampson, stated that an individual needed to be calm and patient because working with horses could be frustrating and time consuming. Karen also referred to problem resolution, stating that individuals needed to,

Emotionally almost switch off from the horse so that if it's going wrong you don't blame yourself, you don't get angry with the horse you just think of it as a problem and respond to it.

When things did go wrong, it was important to remain calm and patient. Beth felt that it was a mistake for someone to lose their temper with horses as *"they [horses] don't understand what you're asking and you lose your temper, it's not really fair"*. The horse was presented as an innocent participant in an interaction and any failures to communicate were perceived not as the horse's fault, but rather the groom's error; a negative reaction from the groom was viewed as inappropriate. This was very similar to the findings by Hochschild (1983), who found that flight attendants were trained in 'anger-desensitisation', and in the importance of using their smile. The grooms, however, perceived that their response to a troublesome interaction with the horse had to be managed in order to keep the horses calm and obedient. The horses, therefore, were equivalent to Hochschild's customers. Grooms' interactions with human clients were very limited and focused mainly on the handing over of a horse prior to, or after, the clients' lessons. Emotion work within the riding school setting did not appear to be a requirement of the relationship between the groom and the client, and could not be equivalent to the relationship between Hochschild's flight attendants and their customers. I shall discuss interactions with humans later in this chapter.

During my fieldwork, I did observe physical contact between participants and the horses that contradicted the requirement to remain calm. On a number of occasions I witnessed a groom hitting a horse with a whip, with their hand, or shouting at the horse when it was not behaving in a required manner. These incidents did not appear to be unusual and would draw in other grooms as observers. Its appeal to the other grooms was twofold. Firstly, a display of anger towards the horse was a clear contradiction in the requirement for a groom to remain calm and in control: they were failing at the management of their emotions. Secondly, as highlighted by Birke (1994) and in the section on 'injury' above, it

reminded the grooms that the horses were not always tame, domestic non-human animals that could be relied on to behave as required. By demonstrating anger, using the whip, or shouting, the groom was sending the message to the observers (including the horse) that they were in control of the situation. Clearly, there are similarities here to the broader area of feminism within the field of human-animal studies which compare the oppression of women to the oppression of non-human animals (Adams and Donovan, 1995). By hitting the horses the grooms were participating in a similar framework to that uncovered within feminism: domination of the powerless by those with greater power.

The riding school employers perceived there to be similarities between the skills needed to work with horses and those needed to work with children. Sarah explained that she would look positively on a potential employee who had previous experience with children, stating that *“if they’ve got the patience for children they’ll have the patience for animals too”*. Like Sarah, Sheila also referred to children, stating that *“they need to know their restrictions like a child needs to know its restrictions”*. This was not observed at the riding schools, however, as interaction between grooms and children were limited: only grooms with additional teaching responsibilities had any real contact with children at the riding schools. It is not difficult, however, to draw an analytical comparison between the negative behaviours shown to the horse and negative behaviours shown to children. Children, like non-human animals and women, are the least powerful members of society.

Aggression towards the horses was viewed negatively by the yard managers and owners. Adele, the yard manager at Sampson explained to me that a ‘speed up’ had occurred at the riding school and that grooms were expected to complete tasks in a shorter amount of time. She stated that this resulted in tempers being lost during interactions with the horses, adding that it was a ‘problem’ that she wanted to resolve. This was similar to the Hochschild’s findings in her study of flight attendants (1983). Hochschild found that a ‘speed up’ within the airline

industry resulted in the withdrawal, by the flight attendants, of emotion work resulting in 'surface acting'. Within the riding school, however, the horses were the recipients of the display, and it was from them that emotion work was withdrawn. Flight attendants may have presented a fake smile to their customers but, at the riding school, the horses felt and heard the 'failed transmutation' in terms of shouts and hits.

4.3 Riding Skills

Another set of skills discussed at the riding school were those pertaining to the riding of horses. At Knightly, research participants rode horses both for pleasure and had the occasional training lesson given by Keith, the owner. At Sampson the grooms rode some of the horses in the afternoon if they had time, as well as partaking in training lessons. As specified in Chapter Four, six out of sixteen participants also owned their own horses (this number does not include the owners of the riding schools) and therefore had the opportunity to ride outside of work hours.

When individuals did discuss riding skill, it was surprising how often it was presented negatively. Carol, a groom at Sampson, told me that she did not like the fast ponies that she felt were easily capable of unseating her. Abby, another very experienced groom stated that she used to get scared riding small fast ponies and Donna told me that she had completely lost her confidence at one point, and was still trying to rebuild it. Karen, the daughter of the owner at Knightly, explained that she used to cry at the prospect of riding fast and uncontrollable horses. Abby told me that her own horse was "*a complete b*tch*" to ride, as it frequently tried to run away with her and Becky described her own horse as "*a pain in the a*se*" to ride.

Groom's individual dislikes and apprehension around riding did not appear to be something they discussed amongst themselves. They did, however, openly talk about a reluctance to ride horses due to physical tiredness and/or having too much work to complete. Although I am sure that physical tiredness had an impact on

their desire to ride, this narrative also served as a 'cover story' that they told each other in order to avoid specifying any emotional negativity around riding.

The act of riding horses was not always discussed in negative terms. The most positive stories regarding riding, however, were always set outside of the context of the formalised riding lesson. As Adele stated,

It's a galloping through an open field with the wind on your face and it's just the two of you. It's a bit like having an itch right in the back of your back and you scratch it one day by riding and it's fine, you don't ride for a few days and it comes back with a vengeance.

When riding the horse without any observers, the grooms seemed able to enjoy riding, without having to think about representing their own skill and potentially hiding their own fear. Beth, a groom at Sampson who initially stated that she did not like riding horses, explained that she did not like having to ride to a standard, preferring to ride horses out on a casual hack. Debby also highlighted the difference between riding as an individual endeavour and riding as a guided endeavour,

[I enjoy] the staff lessons, yes. But also I enjoy exercising the horses as well, if they need a bit of exercise, taking them in the school. Because it's time for me to see, without anyone else being there, what I know, what I don't know and what I can improve. It would just be me doing it. Because you're just the only one having to think about you, you haven't got someone else thinking for you.

Riding within a lesson, therefore, could be seen as situation which involved a degree of emotional labour in order to hide negative feeling. Like the section on horse interaction above, the representation of skill demanded a display of calmness and confidence. When this was not felt, emotion work had to be carried out. Riding without an observer was, therefore, a more positive experience. Only when the participants rode the horses, unsupervised, were they able to indulge in

their enjoyment of horses without being either engaged in a work task or subject to a skills assessment by others. In their research on the culture around horses, Latimer and Birke (2009) found that the competitive element of riding was fundamental to the participation in the horse world. As they stated: “*in this world riding is key, not just for ‘pleasure’ but also for competition and sport*” (2009: 4). Escaping this competitive drive, therefore, may well have been something the grooms strived for, but mainly failed to achieve. The solitary riding experience was not something I was aware frequently occurred at the riding schools, thus riding was normally carried out within a stress inducing environment. Perhaps it was whilst riding horses, in an unstructured format, that my research participants were able to express their real emotion regarding the non-human animals. In the moments between filling hay nets and skipping out stables, they could interact with the horse to the exclusion of that which surrounded them. I would argue that this interaction focused on the concept of ‘the taming of the wild’ highlighted earlier in this chapter and less to do with any innate or perceived need to ‘care’ and ‘nurture’. As Birke (1994) states,

...the idea of ‘the horse’ contains not only the notion that horses come to symbolise certain aspects/values of human culture, but also the notion that humans can partake of wildness and animality through our association with them (1994: 20).

The horse also enables humans the opportunity to interact with a non-human animal that only borders on the domestic, generating a whole new language of communication in the process.

5 Interaction with Humans

Six out of sixteen research participants highlighted interaction with other members of staff as an important skill. There were different descriptions of the use of this skill. Sarah and Adele both felt that it was important for grooms to be able to work

together in a team, which would enable them to complete some tasks more effectively. As Karen stated,

There are lots of jobs where you need more than one person, say bringing several horses in, pushing a hay bale down. Things like that. You've got to be able to work together, I think.

Value was also placed on a groom's ability to work independently. Karen stated that a groom needed to "be able to be told what to do" and Keith added that,

They need to be able...to work without too much supervision because that takes too much time; they need to have a certain amount of motivation and initiative and so on.

This was reflected in Nusser's study of a competition yard in America. The groom's employer stated that,

"For me," she [the competitor employer] explains, "I need a groom to decrease my stress, not increase it" (2004: 71).

The groom, therefore, needed to know their job and know what they were supposed to be doing without much guidance. As explored in Chapter Five, and highlighted by Cassidy, the process of observation was clearly a method that would allow the groom to learn their job role whilst causing the least amount of disruption to their fellow workers or employers.

The ability to communicate well with clients was considered, by one groom to be an important skill. Chloe felt that a good groom needed to be friendly and stated,

Although a lot of horsey people aren't friendly, I think it's much nicer if you are because you've got so many customers around and so many different people to know, and stuff. If you're not very friendly then it's not gonna really work because you're too temperamental, and stuff, with what people say.

Chloe's observation, however, highlighted the implicit recognition that grooms were not required to be 'friendly' or to have positive skills relating to interactions with humans. The essential skills of the groom focused more clearly on interaction with and the care of the horse.

My observations reflected the quotes outlined above. It was clear that the grooms were required, to a degree, to work on their own and in close proximity to other members of staff. Only Ella, the groom at Sampson who cared for the rescue ponies, remained completely isolated from the others. Additionally, the grooms were required to care for colleague's horses when they were sick or on a day off. On one occasion Becky stated that she "*love [d] Abby to bits*". Abby had taken a day off to visit the doctor and Becky had been responsible for the ponies for the day. Becky, when I asked her how her day had gone, stated that it had been "*nice and relaxing*" because Abby had "*got everything ready*" for her.

The ability to maintain good relations with work colleagues was therefore important in order to share human resources when necessary and was more relevant than the ability to communicate with clients. On very rare occasions, a working relationship developed into a friendship that continued outside of the workplace. At Knightly, Becky and Karen maintained a friendship, and frequently socialised with each other, whereas at Sampson the grooms only socialised for events such as birthdays or the Christmas party. Maintaining friendships that existed outside of the riding school could have been challenging due to a high turnover of staff. As Karen stated,

When I was younger we always used to have working pupils and so I was always friends with them. We'd tend to go out together and things. You get to know people really well and suddenly you turn round and they're leaving. It's really quite odd.

Karen told me how she developed many such friendships at the riding school, only to have the individual leave and break contact. She explained that as she got older and went to university the situation only became more apparent. She would work

with grooms for a whole summer, leave for university in the autumn and return at Christmas to find a completely different set of staff. Karen perceived this as being a reflection of her position as the daughter of the owner; whereas this pattern of friendship forming, and breaking, appeared to be reflected amongst all the grooms. This situation is contrary to what Lewis found in a similarly caring environment: the special care baby unit. Lewis found that,

The emphasis placed on emotional detachment and the absence of formal support mechanisms has pushed collective emotional labour into informal groups based around personal friendships (2005: 579).

The riding schools suffered from a lack of formal support mechanisms that would help the staff in the management of their emotional labour. Additionally, there was a lack of the equivalent informal grouping based on friendships: grooms rarely appeared to make close personal friendships that existed outside of the riding school environment. Grooms, therefore, were comparatively lacking in support to manage the emotional labour, which was required in order to demonstrate their skill with the horses. It may have been this lack of the close personal friendships and support mechanisms that gave rise to the 'bitchiness' that participants described as being an element of working alongside women.

5.1 'Bitchiness'

In contrast to the 'caring' and 'mothering' skills outlined above, women were also presented, by the participants, to be inherently 'bitchy' and this was perceived as a negative characteristic. Becky, for example, stated that she *"hates working with girls"* as she did not like the *"bitchiness"*. Donna added that *"women all together can be bitchy"*.

'Bitchiness', or indirect aggression, was generally referred to by the participants as a disingenuous form of behaviour, as Becky explained,

I just don't like the bitchiness and slagging girls off behind their backs, 'cos I don't do that. And then when I hear like the girls slagging the other girls off

to me, I'm like: "well go and tell them". Then [it] just really bugs me. That's why I don't like girls.

The riding school environment was generally presented as a space where 'bitchy' and negative behaviour took place. Although no one individual derogated a specific individual privately to me, it was highlighted that indirect aggression was present on the yard. As Becky stated *"there's quite a few girls that are bitches on this yard"*.

Paul, the only male groom, also perceived 'bitchiness' to be both present at the riding school, and the domain of women. When asked what it was like to work with women, Paul explained that they were,

Bitchy... just like bitching and bitching really. They all mouth each other of...that's it women for you really (laugh).

Paul however, did participate in some of the conflicts that took place on the yard, which contradicted his assertion that indirect aggression was an act mainly carried out by women. Paul had an understanding of the broader gender perceptions, therefore, in spite of behavioural realities. Individuals did not restrict their demonstrations of indirect aggression to disingenuous discussion held in complete privacy. Individuals occasionally brought the subject of their aggression into the interaction. This turned the 'bitchiness' into a more overt form of aggression that could be viewed by a larger audience. An example of this can be seen in how Carol behaved towards Fiona whilst directing the latter's positioning of a yard vehicle carrying hay nets. As the field notes stated,

I had heard Carol telling Fiona, who was on the quad [bike] to go "back a bit, back a bit". Beth said to Carol, "she's all right there". Carol then said to Beth, so that Fiona couldn't hear, "I'm just trying to annoy Fiona".

In this example, Carol demonstrated both her negative opinion of Fiona to Beth and her lack of regard for whether Fiona overheard her. Her aggression was still

'indirect' in that it followed the rules of being 'hidden', but the possibility of her being overheard heightened the potential damage that could be suffered by Fiona.

Although not discussed in full with the participants, it was clear that the 'bitchiness' perceived as occurring within the riding schools could have been representative of a wider environment within the horse industry. Debby explained that she thought people involved with horses were generally "rude and horrible". This did not necessarily mean that all 'horsey' people utilised methods of indirect aggression, but did imply that this group had a reputation for negative behaviour when interacting with humans.

It is important to enquire as to the possible causes of indirect aggression within the fieldwork sites. The above example regarding Carol and Fiona could be interpreted as a team strengthening interaction. Carol sought to identify Beth as part of the team, and Fiona as external to the team. As Owens, Shute, and Slee argue,

The bitching, gossiping or story telling helps to bind the friendship group together and create intimacy for those who are in as against those who are out (2000: 31).

As highlighted in the previous section, a high turnover of staff meant that strong friendships were not given the opportunity to develop, which could have resulted in the use of indirect aggression as a method for quickly determining friendship groupings and status. Team positions, however, can be fluid and open to interpretation. Becky's opinion regarding Karen is a good example of this phenomenon,

Yeah she's [Karen] brilliant...when I started everyone told me she was a bitch... I've got to know her and I think she's fantastic.

Karen, the subject of negativity as shall be highlighted in Chapter Seven, was seen here in a positive light, albeit with the recognition of the dominant interpretation of her as a 'bitch'. It could be that Becky, who above stated that she rejected the use

of indirect aggression by females, felt more sympathetic towards Karen, perceiving her as the 'victim' of 'bitchiness' from the other yard staff.

Another reason given for indirect aggression at the yard was the generation of excitement and the alleviation of boredom. As Becky explained,

I suppose it [bitchy behaviour] makes them feel good 'cos obviously most horsey women don't have a bloody life. Go home, stay round the farm, you know it's their life. So obviously, they need to make it a bit more exciting, you know.

This justification was also cited by the school girls in Owens, Shute, and Slee's research. They found that,

The girls perceived that these behaviours provided something to do as a way of alleviating boredom and of bringing fun or excitement to their lives (2000: 28).

The riding school environment, dominated by daily routine and physical tasks, was arguably one that gave rise to a certain amount of boredom. As stated in Chapter Four, informal interaction allowed the staff to reduce the monotony of repetitive tasks. Indirect aggression is one form of informal interaction that could, by changing the dynamics of team membership and personal friendships, alleviate boredom. It seems, however, a heavy price to pay for a touch of excitement.

Only once was female biology cited as a justification for indirect aggression. Abby simply stated that women's 'bitchiness' was due to their hormones. In spite of being such a large element of the daily tasks at the riding schools, further biological differences, such as strength, was not cited by any participants as a justification for 'bitchiness' amongst the females.

Indirect aggression was not always seen as the exclusive domain of women. Becky discussed Paul, the only male groom at the riding schools, and stated that,

Oh he's [Paul] the biggest bitch of the lot of them...yeah (laughs)...yeah men are a lot worse though have you ever heard men when they're bitching...aw they're bad.

Becky explained that she had worked with men in her prior occupation and that she had witnessed 'bitchy' behaviour comparable to that which she had seen demonstrated by the women at the riding school. Paul also highlighted the 'bitchiness' of men, and gave the following example,

The man who owns the newsagent is loaded and he just bitches at everyone who wears cheap shirts, cheap trousers, shoes. He has to have everything like top make, like £500 for a shirt. He bought 5 shirts the other day for £500, £100 per shirt, and they're all multicoloured like yellow, red, green, and purple pink. And he ripped one so he had to chuck it straight in the bin, just a little hole in the sleeve so he chucked it straight in the bin.

Although Paul used the term 'bitch' to in relation to his previous employer, he was clearly describing a different type of behaviour to that ascribed to women. Whereas the key element of female indirect aggression appears to be its covert aspect, Paul stated that the newsagent owner bitched "at" other people. An interaction that was not covert, therefore, but more overt and direct. It was also interesting to note that the content of the negative comments focused on material goods. Although the participants yielded limited data regarding the content of indirect aggression amongst women, the examples I observed focused upon more personal comments regarding an individual. For example, when the grooms at Sampson faced the prospect of a popular groom being replaced by a new groom, Beth stated, "*I don't want to work with ugly people*". When the new groom finally joined the yard, Beth told me that she was "*a bit retarded*". These personal attacks on appearance and character were very different from the 'bitchiness' of Paul's ex-employer. By associating indirect aggression with men, however, both Paul and Becky attempted to prevent their own work from being sex-typed as a purely female environment.

It is also important to highlight the reliance of the term 'bitch' on the understanding of non-human animals and women in society. As Adams and Donovan state,

Historically, the ideological justification for women's alleged inferiority has been made by appropriating them to animals (1995: 1).

Not only is the appropriation of non-human animal terms demeaning towards women, but it also implies the low status of the non-human animal involved. As Dunayer highlights, the 'bitch' is actually a term that refers to a female dog which is 'exploited' to produce litters that can be sold by breeders. She explains,

In the language of dog breeders, bitch denotes a female dog able to produce a litter. As pejorative, the term has remained female specific. But why should calling a woman a "bitch" impute malice and selfishness? Given that most dogs are living and eager to please, the metaphor's sharp contempt seems puzzling. Breeders, however, have always treated the female dog with contempt – as a means to a useful, profitable, or prestigious litter (1995: 14).

The term 'bitch' is therefore negative, implying malice and selfishness, and disingenuousness, as described by the grooms. This is not an accurate reflection of the actual female dog, but a reflection of the negative and low status position humanity accords the female dog.

This characteristic of 'bitchiness', when interacting with humans, contrasted greatly with the representation of how a groom should interact with the horse, where perceptions were saturated with references to 'love' as opposed to 'bitchiness'. The human and non-human animal relations, therefore, were perceived as being both different from the intra-human adult relations and more central to the work and the emotional labour it demanded.

6 The Unquestioned 'Love'

As outlined in the above sections, the groom's relationship with the horses was far from simplistic and the horse was bound in with notions of emotion, power, animality, and 'femininity'. There appeared to be, however, a hidden contradiction in the emotional presentation that was made by the grooms.

Emotional labour as defined by Hochschild (1983) was clearly a key element of a groom's work and, in spite of negative talk about horse riding and interaction, the underlying assumption of the groom's 'love' for the horse remained unquestioned. If put in terms of Hochschild's research, it would be equivalent to theorising that although the flight attendant suffered from failed transmutation of the emotional system, they still 'loved' the customers. When making this comparison, the inherent schism is revealed. Why is the assumption of the groom's 'love' for the horse not questioned, whereas the flight attendant is assumed to be 'faking' their emotion?

Flight attendants, according to Hochschild, entered the industry because they were attracted to the glamour of flying and travel. Grooms, according to my findings entered the industry because of a 'love' for the horse and the desire to experience something akin to a language with a 'wild' non-human animal. This assumes that flight attendants and grooms differ in the emotional authenticity of their motivations for performing emotional labour to the required standard in the workplace. I would argue that, as Bolton and Boyd (2003) suggest, the flight attendant's motivations are more complex and they are not simply passive actors being manipulated by a company to present a 'correct' emotional display. As Badgett and Folbre state,

Many, though certainly not all, care services are motivated by motives more complex than pecuniary or instrumental concerns. They involve a sense of connection with the care recipient that may be based on affection, altruism or social norms of obligation and respect (1999: 329).

Like the grooms, are the flight attendants motivated by a positive emotional (although perhaps not referred to as 'love') feeling towards their clients? Bolton and Boyd certainly argue that the flight attendants are far more adept in their emotion management than Hochschild would credit them. They state that rather than being passive, flight attendants are actually,

capable of mixing and managing all forms of emotion management according to 'rules' other than those solely controlled by the organisation (2003: 304).

If this is the case, then it seems unlikely that Bolton and Boyd's flight attendants are emotion free (or experience only negative emotion) when conceiving of their clientele. If the flight attendants' emotion work is found to be more complex than originally conceived by Hochschild, then it is clear that the grooms' emotion work towards the horses also deserves to be interrogated. Bendelow and Williams (1998) argue that emotions, as a concept, have tended to be viewed negatively. They state that,

...emotions have tended to be dismissed as private, 'irrational', inner sensations, which have been tied, historically, to women's 'dangerous desires' and 'hysterical bodies'. Here, the dominant view, dating as far back as Plato, seems to have been that emotions need to be 'tamed', 'harnessed' or 'driven out' by the steady (male) hand of reason (1998: xv).

Emotion, therefore, is ultimately bound up in how humans conceive 'the wild' and 'nature' and they are our link to both conceptions of femininity and also animality. This gives them a 'realness' which cannot easily be challenged and, as Hochschild observed, the value placed upon authenticity has recently increased. Layder (2004) highlights this link between emotion and authenticity, and states,

Jobs that rely on high levels of emotional labour require employees to simulate pleasant or charming personas or sensitive, caring behaviour irrespective of how they are really feeling or whether they are dealing with a

particularly difficult or irate customer. This raises the question of authenticity in relationships and feelings about the self (2004: 74).

If emotion is, by default, conceived alongside 'nature' and human 'bodies', then it is unsurprising that, in an environment where value is placed on authenticity of emotion, the 'love' that is felt for the horse by a groom, goes unquestioned. There exists, therefore, a greater focus on an individual's emotional labour carried when working with non-human animals in contrast to emotional labour carried out when working with human adults. Emotion work was at the core of the skills perceived as being essential in order to succeed within the riding schools and it was frequently demonstrated when discussing the determination, dedication and love for the horse that an individual needed to possess in order to remain within the job. This contrasted with both the intra-human working relationship, requiring some element of teamwork intermingled with indirect aggression, and the groom/client relationship which (especially for grooms with no teaching requirements) remained almost non-existent. The emphasis placed on emotional labour with regards to non-human animals was again highlighted when the 'masculine' elements of the work were taken into account. The groom's work was physically demanding and both injury and risk is elevated in status. These characteristics, when viewed from a sociological perspective of occupational segregation, should sex-type the work as more gender neutral. This is clearly not the case. Kelan (2009) found that in the information and communications technology (ICT) environment whilst skills such as teamwork were recognised as crucial, the workplace remained dominated by men. In the same way that computers continue to be associated with men, horses continue to be associated with women (Lantra, 2011).

When the grooms themselves cease to be convinced that the positive emotion they feel towards the horse is really 'real' and when their own emotions fail to be authentic, they resign. In this sense, they are subject to a 'failed transmutation of an emotional system' (Hochschild, 1983). They make the transition from 'deep acting' to 'surface acting' to estrangement from their emotions. As explored in

Chapter Five, however, most grooms do not leave the industry altogether. Rather, they find themselves engaged in the paradox outlined by Hochschild. She states,

The present-day western paradox of love is this. As never before, the modern culture invites a couple to aspire to a richly communicative, intimate, playful, sexually fulfilling love. We are invited not to hedge our bets, not to settle for less, not to succumb to pragmatism, but, emotionally speaking, to 'aim high'. At the same time, however, a context of high divorce silently warns us against trusting such a love too much (1998: 8).

When the notion of the 'couple' is replaced with the horse the contradiction of the grooms becomes clear. The groom aspires to a richly communicative, intimate and playful relationship with the horse. When this fails, the groom and observers of the groom, feel that they themselves are the failure. The underlying assumption of 'love' remains unchallenged.

7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the skills that are perceived to be required by a groom. Those skills were split into two categories: task orientated and attitudinal. The physical element of the groom's job was highlighted, especially in terms of the skill of efficiently and effectively cleaning a horse's stable. This physical element was closely related to the methods of learning discussed in the previous chapter. As Sarah explained, it is important for a new groom to understand how much hard work is involved in the job. This understanding, according to the participant's perceptions of methods of learning, would be difficult to acquire from a college-based environment. Therefore, no matter whether a groom perceived themselves as simply a "sh*t shoveller" or a highly skilled carer of a horse, the ability to 'muck out' was viewed as important and this was grounded in a specific framework of learning. This framework, as stated previously, rejected formal methods of training in favour of informal, observational and experiential methods of learning. Another representation of skill and prior experience focused on the injuries that participants

had received when interacting with horses. The dramatic language of injuries (e.g. the 'smashing' of the face) expressed a notion of 'taming' the wildness of the horse. 'War wounds' were demonstrative of battles fought, and won, by the humans, who were presented as gleaming enjoyment from risk taking. These 'notches on the stable door' of injuries could only be gained from prior experience and not from the college-based yard, which is perceived as an almost sterilised, risk-free, environment. This physicality contradicted the otherwise feminine elements of the work of a groom and may have been a strategy of 'de-feminising' the work.

Participants also viewed the ability to care for the horse as a valuable skill. It was clear, however, that the majority of horse care that occurred on the yard was of a basic level. The more technical skills, such as working out a horse's feed, administering medication, etc. were carried out by the highest status grooms on the yard. Other than the cleaning of wounds, the other grooms did not seem to require any more technical skills. Like the physical elements of the work, technical skill can be viewed as a perceived masculine skill and the elevating of its status served to reject the overtly feminine care work of the groom. It is ironic, therefore, that the male owner of Knightly, Keith, stated that a groom needed only to be of BHS Stage One level (and he did not state that a groom actually needed to hold this qualification). Basic skills at horse care were required and those more in depth skills, as taught at a college or in the higher levels of the BHS qualifications, were not. Additionally, technical horse care skills were perceived as valuable on a commercial yard, and not valuable when obtained through a formal method of learning such as a college. This was a reflection of a resistance to the codification of skills within this sector, partly driven by the reliance on intangible skills as a definer of participation.

Women were discussed in terms of their 'natural' caring and mothering abilities and their participation in the horse industry was viewed as fulfilling an individual 'natural need'. Grooms were expected to be calm and patient with the horses; to remain in

control of their emotions in spite of any conflict. Women were therefore presented as 'emotional and caring beings' that had to actively control an 'undercurrent' of emotion in order to present the correct display to the horses and other observers who would potentially judge their level of skill. Women were stuck in a 'double-requirement' with regards to their emotions. Not only did they have to control their inherently 'female' emotional landscape in order to interact calmly with the horse in spite of any problems, but they had to demonstrate that they really experienced authentic positive emotions towards the horses. The female grooms were required to carry out emotion work *par excellence*.

Similarities were also suggested, by those responsible for employing grooms, between the patience needed for horses and that required to deal with children. Horse and children, however, were not the same and this was demonstrated in the examples of the failed transmutation (Hochschild, 1983) of emotions towards the horses. This failed transmutation, or the failure for the groom to manage their negative emotional response towards the horse, resulted in direct aggression aimed at the horses. These incidents were not viewed positively by the yard managers and were seen as behaviour that needed to be curtailed. They were, however, actively observed by other grooms and were demonstrations of a power relationship between the grooms and the non-human animals, the former actively subduing the behaviour of the latter. This power relationship was different from the relationship between a groom and their colleagues or between a groom and a young client and the non-human animal was ultimately a far lower status participant.

Male participants also perceived a 'mothering' imperative of women, and commented that women tended to leave the industry in order to have children. Career progression within the industry was assumed, by the male participants, not to be a motivation of women. This finding can be related to the arguments made by Hochschild in her book, 'The Second Shift' (1989). Hochschild argued that women who were also parents and worked in full-time jobs outside of the home

found themselves to be taking responsibility for the majority of the work within the home, including care of the children. This, she argued, stemmed from the difference in what was perceived as the 'traditional' roles of women. Men's traditional role was seen as being located in the workplace, whereas women's traditional role was located within the home. Women, according to Hochschild, have to negotiate their work in relation to the second shift, and the men within the riding school believed that this negotiation would result in women simply leaving the industry to have children. This perception of women's role in the horse industry once they took on external caring responsibilities could additionally result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. Even if they did not fully leave the industry, the male participants felt that women would not progress their careers. Again, this can be compared to Hochschild's research, which highlighted how women with children would reduce the priority of their careers in order to 'make room' for their family and home. Women were therefore not expected to succeed in an industry according to a male definition of success, i.e. rising to a higher status role. The female definition of success within the horse industry was readjusted to simply include longevity, without career progression. This, crucially, highlights the connection between the high value placed on prior experience and a broader position of women in the workplace. When career success no longer becomes a viable option, just 'sticking it out' becomes the alternative.

The way the grooms interacted with the horses and their fellow humans was described in two distinct ways. Interaction between humans was described positively on occasions, but more in terms of 'bitchiness' and this had a definite gender bias. 'Bitchiness' can be understood as a form of indirect aggression, which has been demonstrated as occurring amongst younger females within the formal education environment (Owens, Shute, and Slee, 2000). Within the riding school, indirect aggression appeared to develop from a need to relieve boredom, as a team strengthening technique, and in order to challenge the status or another groom. Concurrently, the language used, 'bitch' is reflective of the status accorded to non-human animals within human society. Non-human animals are awarded a

lower status; therefore demeaning non-human animal-related terminology is used to ascribe negative characteristics to a human. This form of indirect aggression, however, was contrary to the characteristic of caring and mothering that was perceived as a justification for women's continued dominance within the industry. The one similarity, however, focused on which behaviour was perceived as 'natural'. Whilst a woman was perceived as naturally 'bitchy' towards humans they were also perceived as 'naturally' caring towards the horses.

If one discounts a biological imperative to engage in a caring activity, what motivated the grooms to remain with the horses? I have argued that it was during the interaction with the horse, such as riding, that individuals were able to engage with the other being in a positive and enjoyable way, but that this could only occur when out of sight of other humans. Without the external pressure to behave or ride to a particular standard it did not matter so much if riding position was incorrect, or how the individual reacted when the horse misbehaved. Solitary riding or interaction with the horse allowed the participants to avoid the feeling that their skills were being constantly assessed by others and that their own emotional response had to be managed for an audience. Therefore, interaction with the horse and the riding of the horse *in company* were activities that, on the majority of occasions, required additional effort in the form of emotional labour. Riding alone was like an itch, and all the hard physical work, monotonous tasks, low-pay, and long hours were the price grooms had to pay in order to scratch it. Unfortunately, their 'itches' were rarely scratched, and the grooms were left performing a role where their 'love of the horse' was the 'main act' as a fundamental requirement for their job as a groom. Lastly, I have questioned the basis for this 'love', highlighting the comparison between Hochschild's flight attendants, as reconceived by Bolton and Boyd, and the grooms within this thesis. I have raised a great concern that the basis for any 'love' presented as being felt by the grooms for the horses is taken for granted and remains unquestioned. This, I have argued, is representative of the continued existence of a conflation between emotion and 'the natural'. The love that a groom purports to feel towards a horse deserves as rigorous a sociological

enquiry as any other form of 'love'. It is a telling observation that the incidents of aggression towards the horses that I observed during my fieldwork greatly outnumbered any incidents of affection towards the horses.

In the following chapter I am going to demonstrate, using exemplars, how conflict within the riding school was ultimately an expression of the perceptions of skills and methods of learning explored in this and the previous chapter. This will enable a pulling together and development of the three theoretical strands of occupational segregation, emotional labour and the field of human-animal studies.

Chapter Seven: Skill and Status

1 Introduction

The previous chapters have explored my research setting; the two distinct learning methods by which research participants have acquired their skills; and the skills, as viewed by participants, that are required in order to succeed within the riding school. I have discussed the higher value that is placed on informal methods of learning, such as prior experience, observation, and family history, relative to formal methods such as qualifications and college-based learning. This difference in value, I argued, can be viewed as structuring participation within the riding school, both in terms of gender and individual background. Not only does the high value placed on informal learning enable the recreation of occupation segregation by sex, but it also enables further selection within the category of gender; rejecting those who are overly educated and therefore of a higher external social status. I have also shown how the employers within the fieldwork sites were satisfied with informal methods of learning for the skilling of their grooms, whilst concurrently utilising the BHS qualifications system in order to either gain revenue through clients, or offset costs of employees. Additionally, I defined the skills that were perceived as being required by a groom within the riding schools, showing how much of these rely on emotion work and a concept of a 'love' the person has for horses. I highlighted that perceptions of human to human interaction differed greatly from perceptions of human to horse interactions. Lastly, I demonstrated how complicated a groom's relationship with the horse actually was, and how it depended on a degree of solitary interaction, or at least the possibility of solitary interaction, to be fulfilling. This enabled me to question the authenticity of the 'love' for the horses as presented by the participants, relating this question to an overall unquestioned acceptance of the emotion that is felt, by humans, towards non-human animals.

In this chapter I shall develop these themes further, using exemplars of conflict. I shall begin by showing how conflict exposed a status hierarchy that was based within the skills and methods of learning described previously. I shall then describe three examples of ‘outsiders’; people, or groups of people who were actively rejected from the riding school environment. Again, I shall explain how these ‘outsiders’ relate to findings in the previous chapters.

2 Status and Length of Service

This first section will explore examples of conflict that focused on the quality of a groom’s work. It shall demonstrate how quality is inextricably linked to length of service, which, in turn, defines status. These examples of conflict related mainly to the task of mucking out and took place only between grooms.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the ability to clean a stable quickly and effectively was seen as a positive skill, but perceptions of this skill correlated mainly with length of service, i.e. those who had only been working at the yard for a short period were perceived as being less skilled at mucking out than others. This negotiation of status was clearly demonstrated within my observations. On one occasion I witnessed Karen becoming frustrated with Paul and claiming she was going to “*commit homicide*” as a result of the length of time it was taking him to clean a stable. Clearly, there was also a potential gendered element to this status negotiation. Paul was the only male groom present at the riding school and Karen may have been quicker to highlight his slow work as opposed to one of the female grooms simply on the basis of his gender.

Further evidence of the association between length of service and skill’s assessments can be seen in the following example. Carol stated that,

She [Fiona] took ages muck out and she only had Guy, Phantom and the four ponies to do, which took her ages. And then she had a paddy because apparently she was doing them really well. And she didn’t want to help any of us and we were all done by the time, she’d even not finished mucking out,

so we had our lunch early. And she was moaning because we were all sitting down doing nothing, but we were all done.

In this instance, Carol had worked at the riding school for a longer period than Fiona. She, therefore, occupied a higher level status position which enabled her to criticise Fiona on her mucking out ability. In addition to this, Carol suggested that Fiona had displayed frustration towards the other grooms as they had finished their work and had their lunch instead of helping Fiona to finish her stables. Even grooms who had only worked at the stables for a very short period were still able to utilise relative positions of status in order to criticise the work of others, as can be seen in the following example,

During one morning, Donna commented on how long it had taken Peter, a work experience student, to muck out a bed. Later the same day she stated to Paul "is he [Peter] still doing that?"

In this interaction, Donna presented Peter as the outsider, positioning herself in a higher status position. Donna was still subject to criticisms from those who had been at the yard longer, however, and was also the subject of criticism, from Rachel and Paul, that again focused on the ability to muck out a stable.

In the above section, one can see how criticisms focusing on the skill of mucking out were reliant on a pre-existing understanding of the high value placed upon practical experience, as a method of learning, in the form of length of service. This enabled the participants to negotiate their relative status positions and individuals only criticised the skill of those who were of a lower status than they were.

3 Employment Role and Task Requests

The organisation of status was also exposed when a member of staff was asked to complete a task that was outside of their normal daily routine. Only those of a higher employment status could request that another individual complete an additional task and expect that request to be carried out. This did not exclude the

possibility of conflict, but any conflict remained covert instead of overtly expressed. The following three examples demonstrate how a task request, made on lines of employment status, still resulted in conflict.

The tasks Rachel, as the receptionist, was able to give the grooms were limited to additions to the daily routine and did not involve substantial changes to the routine. To give a task to a groom, Rachel was required to leave reception and walk onto the yard. She did not stray too far from reception; hence, all communication between her and the grooms was carried out with raised voices. This gave the impression that a task request was simply 'deposited' on the yard by an external force, leaving the grooms to then negotiate their own status around the request. On one occasion Rachel 'deposited' such a task on the yard, which caused status to then be renegotiated between the grooms.

During one afternoon, I witnessed Rachel come on to the yard and shout at Abby that a certain pony needed to be tacked up in preparation for a lesson. Abby was clearly busy with another horse, so Rachel immediately called Donna to complete the task. Abby responded by shouting to Rachel "I can do it" in a harsh voice. Once Rachel had left Abby proceeded to angrily walk to the tack room and began throwing pieces of leather. She was glaring at everyone and muttered the word "bitch".

This example begins to unpick the relationship between status and conflict. The receptionist, Rachel, was in a position to give appropriate tasks to grooms whilst they were working on the yard. She did not enter the yard to involve herself in the carrying out of those tasks, or the possible negative reactions of the grooms. By offering the task to Donna, Rachel implied a parity of skills between Donna and Abby, effectively stating that either of them could complete the task of leading the ponies out to the field. This, in turn, implied an equal status between the two grooms. Abby, as the longest serving groom, responsible only for the ponies, reacted against a perceived reduction in her status. By completing the task of

taking the ponies to the field, she ultimately demonstrated her status position as higher to Donna and subordinate to Rachel.

As the movement of horses to and from the fields took time, grooms attempted to reduce the number of trips they had to make by leading as many horses as possible. Catching horses in the field was not always a simple task, as they could sometimes prove evasive. The following example demonstrates how Adele, the yard manager at Sampson, used her elevated employment status to make a request of a groom in spite of the groom's disapproval.

On one occasion, Debby complained that she had been sent to the fields by Adele to catch a pony. Debby felt that Adele should catch the pony as it was to be used in a lesson Adele was teaching. Debby was not able to catch the pony and told me that she thought she was wasting her time as there was a pony on the yard that Adele could use.

Eventually, Adele used the pony already available and Debby reiterated to me that she felt she had wasted her own time. Debby's lack of ability to catch the pony was highlighted as a direct result of Adele's request. In response, Debby criticised Adele's knowledge of the situation: by stating that Adele could have used a pony already on the yard. Debby, by attempting to complete the task, demonstrated her subservient employment position to Adele. Her criticism of Adele, however, created an ambiguity regarding their relative status positions. This ambiguity is concentrated on the similarities in the past experiences of the grooms. Both Debby and Adele had been around horses for similar time periods, both possessed extensive BHS qualifications (Debby had her PTT and Adele her AI), and they were of equal ages. Additionally, Debby had worked at Sampson prior to spending some time working elsewhere. Therefore, negotiating status between these two grooms was somewhat more complex. In terms of skills, Debby felt her ground skills with horses were threatened, and in response she criticised Adele's elevated job role. Again, ultimately Debby's disapproval of the situation remained covert

and she had attempted to carry out the task request made of her by a higher status employee.

The final example details an interaction between Harry (the Knightly handyman), Keith (the owner of Knightly) and Paul (a groom). Harry was an unwaged member of staff, who worked in return for accommodation on site and the use of horses for competition purposes. Keith had informed Harry that, together, they would fix a number of field fences. Keith then reneged on this promise and as a result Harry explained he was “annoyed” with Keith. If Harry had been a paid member of staff he would be unable to voice complaint regarding a task request from a higher status member of staff such as Keith. Harry felt aggrieved, however, that he was subject to these more normal lines of status organisation, perhaps perceiving his own status as outside of this framework. This implied that he associated himself more with Keith than the other staff. The fixing of the fence posts, in the company of Keith, would have placed them on a more even status level, a level which Harry may have felt more comfortable with. Keith treated Harry as a member of staff, when Harry felt he was of higher status. Ultimately, Harry took a groom with him to help fix the fence posts and it was unsurprising, considering the ‘masculine’ stereotype of the handyman relative to the groom that he chose to take Paul.

In conclusion, those of higher employment status made additional work requests to those of lower employment status. Keith asked Harry; Rachel asked Abby; Adele asked Debby. Although those who are subjects of the request may not have liked the additional task they have been given, they would carry it out as long as these lines of status were followed. Disagreement and conflict was generated when status positions were either more ambiguous or threatened in some way.

4 Similar Status

The above two sections have dealt with conflict that was demonstrative of status position as defined by length of service, and employment position. The following section demonstrates a third dynamic of conflict that arose when grooms were

working closely together and were of similar status in terms of employment role. Debby had more extensive experience with horses, had been involved with them for longer, and had more BHS qualifications than Beth. Beth, however, had worked at Sampson's current yard for longer than Debby. To negotiate their relative statuses, therefore, one could have assumed that Debby's experience would place her in a higher position. This was not the case. The following example describes a verbal argument that occurred between two grooms. The grooms were turning the horses loose, in groups of four, in to the riding arena for exercise whilst they mucked out the stables. This meant that only four stables could be cleaned at one time and that the grooms were reliant on each other to work at a similar pace.

*I overheard Debby and another groom bringing in some horses, whilst at the same time a work experience groom called Karen was turning some horses out. I heard Debby shout "don't bring any more horses up now" but Karen did not hear her and continued to take the horses to the arena. Then I heard someone shout "Beauty" a number of times. I went to carry on mucking out and witnessed an argument begin between Debby and Beth. Beth asked Debby why she was so "grumpy". Debby replied that she thought no one was communicating and she had not wanted Beth to bring up any more horses. Karen had then brought up more horses and Debby had been unable to catch a horse called Beauty who was too excited by the new horses. Beth then claimed not to have heard Debby say to not bring up any more horses. Debby repeated that there was no "f***ing" communication and no one was "f***ing well" working together. Beth replied "there's no need to say 'f***ing' every other word". Debby then walked out of the yard leaving Beth and Karen to bring the horses back from the arena.*

The above example demonstrated how, when the normal daily routine that separated the work tasks of the grooms was disrupted, status became a negotiable issue amongst those of similar status: in this case Beth and Debby. The grooms

were forced to work in close proximity and were reliant on each other to maintain a pace that would allow them to complete their work prior to the lunch break. No longer could one groom finish their stables and go to lunch, leaving other grooms to complete their own work. This closer level of teamwork was not a normal situation for the grooms. According to positions of status based on length of service, Beth should have been of higher status. Debby, however, had been involved with horses since she was a child, as could be categorised as a 'lifer' in terms of her position in the horse industry, whereas Beth had only be around horses for 11 months and could be categorised as an 'accident'. These further measurements were engaged in order to negotiate status, which resulted in an ambiguity that erupted into argument. The concept of teamwork was the avenue through which Debby chose the hostilities to be vocalised. Beth's response to Debby's swearing highlighted Beth's calmness and therefore control over the interaction. Teamwork was as ambiguous skill, as seen in Chapter Six. Whilst some participants viewed a groom's ability to work in a team as valuable, the ability to work independently was equally valuable. Whilst the maintenance of good relations with fellow workers was important, the grooms did not pull together into a team that could be comparable to Lewis's informal groups and personal friendships that were found in the special care baby unit (2005). Beth's ability to remain calm, however, was the essence of skill when working with horses. It was with reference to these other, more intangible, skills that status between these closely matched grooms was negotiated. The conflict would not have arisen had the grooms been more used to working together and therefore had more time to negotiate their relative statuses.

5 The 'Outsiders'

In the previous three sections, I looked at how status was defined by taking into account the value placed upon experience and skills. Lines of status were clearly organised and, in spite of mostly low-level demonstrations of conflict, they were

adhered to by the participants. In the following section, I shall use three exemplars to demonstrate an individual or group becomes defined as an 'outsider'.

5.1 Fiona

Although I did not have the opportunity to interview Fiona before she left, I did have a number of opportunities to talk with her informally whilst we worked together. Fiona explained that she had begun working at the riding school in order to have a job she enjoyed and felt had "*meaning*". In this sense she could be categorised as a 'seeker' within the horse industry. Fiona had a university degree in engineering and had recently returned from America where she had been living with her boyfriend. She had no real family history of horses and her only previous experience was as a volunteer at a riding centre for disabled people in America. Fiona worked at Sampson as a working pupil and hoped to process through her BHS qualifications very quickly so that she could work as an instructor.

The following example details an interaction that took place early in my fieldwork. Fiona participated in a discussion, regarding horse medication, with the two co-owners of the riding school. The yard manager and grooms were also present.

Sheila and Sarah [the owners, mother and daughter respectively] were disagreeing about the quantity of medication to be used for each horse. Fiona had the bottle of medication and was reading the instructions. Sheila told Sarah to stop getting annoyed. Sheila then put her arm around Fiona and stated "I'll just stick with the sensible one". Upon this statement, Adele [the yard manager] gave me an exasperated look and Sarah replied "she's on our side". By this, she meant that Fiona, being a groom, did not support Sheila. One of the other grooms then looked up at Adele and said, "you're not the sensible one obviously".

This example of conflict was a negotiation of status that referred to the care of horses. This skill of caring for a horse was shown, in the previous chapter, as being ambiguous in terms of its value. Although discussed positively, it was

associated more negatively with the 'book learning' of colleges. Keith, the owner of Knightly, certainly did not require his grooms to be overly knowledgeable. Chloe's experience demonstrated that in spite of a desire to learn more technical skills of horse care; these were generally always practiced by the highest status people on the yard: hence, the discussion between Sheila and Sarah, and hence Adele's inclusion. It was entirely inappropriate for Fiona, a low status groom with very limited experience and no horse qualifications, only a desire to achieve them, to be involved. Her decision to participate in the discussion was most likely prompted by her own qualifications and higher external status as an Engineer. This participation was sanctioned by Sheila who, by doing so, expressed a higher value in the codified knowledge than was currently normal within the horse environment. This resulted in a conflict between Sheila and the 'educated' Fiona on one side, and Sarah and the grooms on the other side: a perfect example of formal education versus informal education.

From this point on, the grooms viewed Fiona increasingly negatively and her horse skills, as well as her methods of skills acquisition, were increasingly criticised. Her lack of riding ability was discussed by the grooms, and when she failed her BHS Stage One examination they delighted in telling me they disbelieved her "excuse" of a bad back. She was, therefore, perceived as either physically weak, or duplicitous. She was also viewed as not authentic in her ability to work with horses and or her ground skills; as having tried to convince them she was a capable groom when she was not. Beth stated that "*Fiona pulled the wool over everybody's eyes for the first couple of weeks*" and that they all now wanted her to leave. The following describes the yard manager's thoughts about Fiona's methods of skills acquisition,

Adele explained that Fiona had learnt about horses from text books and that she would "argue the point with Sarah. If Sarah says you soak sugar beet for five minutes, you soak it for five minutes, even if you are thinking this isn't right, you don't argue the point". Adele added "you do sometimes, if

you're thinking, well actually if you've got the knowledge, like, I could argue the point and say 'look', but if you don't know what you are on about you go with what's told, not what you read in a book".

In order to contradict a person's knowledge of horse care, a groom had to have the correct status as defined by their skills and methods of skills acquisition. Adele presented Fiona as having gained her knowledge from text instead of previous experience and this, like college-based learning, was viewed negatively as a method of skills acquisition. Additionally, Fiona's use of texts served as a reminder to the other grooms of her academic qualifications and therefore of her higher educational status outside of the environment of the riding school. This added to the perception that she was duplicitous and unwilling to accept her low status as a newly employed groom.

Fiona decided to leave Sampson to be a volunteer working with horses abroad. The grooms were very negative regarding Fiona's resignation and new job. Carol stated, *"she's going to work with lions, I hope they eat her"* and Beth added *"I'll give her arsenic as a leaving present"*. Fiona did not fit the concept of the ideal horseperson. She was a 'seeker', who was unwilling to leave her own external high status behind when she entered the horse industry. The other grooms treated her as an 'outsider' and her resignation was unsurprising.

In terms of my second exemplar, Karen, the situation was more complex. Karen was the subject of negative discussions and comments. She appeared, however, to fit the notion of the ideal groom perfectly: she acquired her skills through a family history of horses and had many years of personal experience. Karen was a capable rider and could complete her tasks as a groom. In the next section, I am going to use examples to explain how an ambiguity regarding her status meant that she ultimately did not fit the criteria of the ideal groom and the impact this had in terms of conflict.

5.2 Karen

As stated above, Karen should have fit the criteria of the ideal groom perfectly. She was, however, a focus of criticism and conflict at the riding school. Karen was the daughter of Keith, the co-owner of Knightly. She told me that her family always had horses and that one of her first memories was of being led on a pony by her mother. She recalled both her parents teaching riding lessons at Knightly throughout her childhood. Karen explained that she used to train horses in order for them to be sold and got her first horse when she was fourteen. As she was growing up she also worked on the yard with the employed grooms. At the time of my fieldwork, Karen was working at Knightly as a groom and instructor whilst on holiday from university where she was training to become a veterinarian.

5.2.1 Not a Groom

Whilst completing my fieldwork, Karen participated as a member of the yard staff. On most days, she had a set number of horses to care for. Although I did not witness evidence to either support or deny her claim, Karen felt that she worked far harder than the other grooms at Knightly. She explained,

If we're not finished by 6pm everyone else will go home but I'll stay working because I don't like the yard looking a mess, I can't stand the thought of a horse's box being a mess. Whenever we have exam days I'm here about 4.30 in the morning, I work through my lunch and finish at 6pm and I don't get a choice in what jobs I do.

Karen, as both groom and owner's daughter, felt she had responsibility for the overall presentation of the yard. This resulted in her belief that she worked far harder than the other grooms did. Not only did she have a daily routine to complete, but also she felt she had to complete other grooms work when it had not been completed to an adequate standard. The BHS examination day was a good example of how Karen saw her role regarding the presentation of the school to clients,

On the afternoon of the BHS examination day I saw Karen looking unhappy and asked her how her day had been. She explained that she had not gone to bed until late the previous evening, as she had been awake for most of the night thinking about the examination day and running through what needed to be done. She stated that she woke up at 4.30am after only one and a half hours sleep. Observing Karen through the day, however, I suspected that she had slept for longer as she lacked any signs of real fatigue.

Karen presented herself as being both responsible and taking her responsibilities seriously. This appeared to me an 'act', the purpose being to distance her from the other yard staff. Karen did not want her status to be perceived as equal to the other grooms and she was presenting herself as the 'outsider'.

Regarding the other grooms, Karen explained that she became frustrated when she saw them not "*pulling their weight*". She added, "*they're my friends, but my dad's away [and] he's told me to keep an eye on the yard, and you're kind of in the middle of it all really*". Karen further legitimised her relatively increased and external status by referring to additional responsibilities purportedly given by her father. The usage of Keith to maintain Karen's status was not a one-way relationship. As briefly touched upon earlier in the chapter, Keith also reinforced Karen's status,

On one occasion I was on the yard talking to Harry. Keith arrived and said, quietly, to Harry, "can you ask Karen if there is anything you can do to help her because she's complaining that she's overworked, but don't tell her that I asked you to help her".

By making this statement, Keith utilised his own elevated status to make a task request of Harry, with the function of making both Harry and myself aware of Karen's increased status above the rest of the grooms. In addition, Keith enabled Karen to have access to a work resource that was unavailable to the other grooms.

This contravened the normal daily routine, which was underpinned by the independence of work tasks.

The grooms perceived Karen's higher status and its impact on her ability to access exclusive resources, unavailable to the rest of them. They reacted with negative comments, Chloe referred to Karen as "*spoilt*" and as "[getting] *everything on a plate*". The following example shows that not only was Karen criticised for her access to task-related resources but she was also criticised for her attempts at taking responsibility for the yard,

Regarding the BHS examination day, Abby told me that Karen had arrived early to help set up the yard. Abby explained, however, that Karen makes mistakes when setting up for the examination days. She stated that she "gets things wrong and causes more stress" and added that when Karen was stressed it did not make anyone else's day any easier. Abby also then admitted she was attempting to make Karen's life more difficult by staying out of her way and not helping her.

By taking ownership of the yard on the BHS examination day, Karen explicitly displayed her elevated status to the other grooms. In order to highlight Karen's 'outsider' status, Abby responded by being critical of her task-related skills and highlighted that Karen was not part of the staff and did not know the routine. Additionally, Abby criticised Karen's ability to manage her emotion, accusing her of getting 'stressed' during the day and making things more difficult for the other grooms. Paul was also heavily critical of Karen's knowledge of the yard routine and stated,

Karen thinks she knows everything. Like the other day, I said 'I'm gonna take the boys [horses] out to the field', and she said 'no you have to skip them out and water first', and then she started saying 'I've been here longer than you I should know'. But then Becky said 'take the boys out, she doesn't know what she's talking about'.

One can see how the distance was created and maintained between Karen and the rest of the grooms. Although she worked as a groom, her elevated status as the owner's daughter allowed her access to exclusive task-related resources and gave her a sense of responsibility for the yard. The grooms maintained the distance by being critical of Karen's skills in terms of both her knowledge of the daily and exceptional (BHS examination day) routine, and her inability to complete work tasks without reliance on extra resources. This resulted in conflict in terms of negative comments from both Karen and the grooms.

5.2.2 Not an Instructor

As one can see from the above, conflict was generated between Karen and the yard staff as a result of Karen's ambiguous status as a groom. Whilst on her university vacation, Karen also worked as an instructor at the riding school. This included providing cover for the other instructors whilst they were on holiday. The following example demonstrates how, even though she had a lot of instructing experience and was qualified to teach, Karen was still criticised by other instructors in terms of her skills.

An instructor, referring to a lesson of hers that had been taught by Karen whilst the instructor was on holiday stated, "I'm going to have to give them a right telling off". She added, "it's not wise to upset the owner's daughter". The instructor explained that the children had been a bit "naughty" in the lesson, but highlighted that this was "only because they were young". The instructor told me that she had asked Karen why she had not put an easy to ride pony at the front of the line of riders. The instructor had explained to Karen that had one particular pony been at the front of the lesson, then the rest of the ponies would have behaved well. Karen had allegedly replied to her that she never puts that particular pony in front. The instructor told me that it was frustrating to teach lessons only to have someone else teach them whilst she was on holiday. She said that the parents then complain that they did not pay just to have another instructor teach the lesson. The

instructor then went quiet and said in a hushed voice, "I'm not one to make a fuss".

The above extract detailed a striking attack on Karen's skills both as an instructor and as an effective emotion manager. The instructor initially highlighted Karen's elevated status as the owner's daughter and almost ironically stated that the young children should have been 'wise enough' not to upset her. This criticism revealed an understanding that the ability to manage one's emotions in relation to clients was a valued skill among the instructors. By presenting Karen as being 'upset' by the children the instructor was presenting her as lacking in skill. The instructor then undermined Karen's skills as an instructor by referring to her choice of positioning of the ponies, and added that Karen had no remorse in justifying her error. To expand the criticism, the instructor involved the parents, highlighting their unhappiness at having another, and by default, lower quality instructor teach their children. The instructor, therefore, presented herself as having to manage the emotional response of the parents, as a direct result of Karen's deficient skills. To conclude her rather damning criticism, the instructor claimed that she would not make a 'fuss', which served to both distance herself from her own comments, leaving any listeners unable to accuse her of being overly hostile towards Karen, whilst presenting herself as, again, a skilled manager of her own emotions. When conceived in terms of Hochschild's concept of emotion work (1983) and the discussion on emotion in the previous chapter, the instructor's criticism becomes especially critical. In Chapter Six, I explained how the horses could be viewed as equivalent to Hochschild's plane passengers and the grooms were equivalent to Hochschild's flight attendants. The above example demonstrates that the instructors had a different relationship with customers that did not necessarily include the horses. For instructors, the emotion work was done for the benefit of the children in the lesson and the parents of those children. In describing Karen as being 'upset' by the children, and stating that the children should have been 'wise enough' not to upset her, the instructor presented Karen herself as equivalent to the customers in Hochschild's analysis and therefore an 'outsider'. Karen was not

a fellow instructor, she was merely a customer and, like the grooms, this instructor has clearly stated: 'Karen is not one of us'.

5.2.3 Not a Manager

Karen was accepted by her fellow workers neither as groom nor instructor, and risked being criticised for her lack of practical skill and emotion work in whichever role she took. She was also, however, unable to take on the role of manager within reception. Towards the end of my fieldwork, a conflict developed involving Karen and a yard staffing issue, and issue normally managed by Rachel. The following extract describes a situation where Karen was perceived to have acted outside of her authority by making staffing changes that impacted on both the receptionist and the grooms,

I overheard Edith say "and then she said she didn't want me, and that it'll be hard for them, but they'll be alright. So I don't know what I'm doing". Edith then raised her arms in exasperation. Rachel replied "yeah, I've had words with Keith about that because she can't just come here and, because we've had a routine and everything's been working fine, and we've not had any problems have we?" I enquired as to what had occurred and discovered that Karen had taken Edith's name off the rota to work a day during the following week. Karen had then told Rachel that Edith was not needed. Rachel was frustrated and Edith was annoyed, stating that she did not now know whether she was supposed to be working the following week or not.

A couple of hours later Paul, Becky, Abby and Rachel were in reception discussing the situation. Rachel explained that the riding school needed more than just two grooms on the yard. She stated that she was angry and frustrated to have been overruled by Karen. Becky then asked who was actually going to be working the following week and Rachel replied "just go by what I say, don't go by what Karen says".

The conflict continued through the rest of the day, elevating to the point where one groom threatened to resign if the yard was left short staffed. Karen was absent

throughout the whole incident. As in the above sections, Karen was accused of interfering with an existing routine, or way of working. Despite her status as the owner's daughter, she was perceived as being an 'outsider' to the working of the riding school. What was also striking about this example was the lack of emotion management from those involved in the discussions. Edith was clearly upset, Rachel was frustrated and the grooms were angry to the point of resignation. Not one behaved as if they were being 'determined and dedicated to continue regardless of adversity', as skill highlighted in the previous chapter. The staff had emotionally united against Karen, the 'outsider'. Ultimately, Karen was unable to maintain an elevated status position as groom, instructor, or manager, in spite of her prior experience, qualifications, and obvious skill.

5.2.4 The Owner's Daughter

Karen was clearly faced with hostility on the yard when she attempted to take on a role that was perceived not to be hers. She did, however, have a role to take: that of the owner's daughter. In contrast to the above examples, the following extract details a situation where Karen correctly fulfilled her role as the owner's daughter. Importantly, in spite of causing others to alter their own plans, her actions did not result in conflict,

On one occasion, Karen altered the existing plans for the use of the riding school's horse lorry. Edith explained that she and the grooms had booked the lorry to take their horses to a local show. Karen ended up taking the lorry, however, to partake in a different event. Later on that day, Abby explained that the grooms were no longer going to the show and instead were going to ride over the common.

Although both Edith and Abby expressed slight disappointment that they would be unable to use the lorry as planned, both accepted that Karen's request took priority. This acceptance was displayed by a total lack of any verbal demonstration of conflict, regardless of my questioning. Karen's use of the lorry for the transportation of her horse to a competition was clearly in line with role of the

owner's daughter and as soon as she fulfilled her expected status position, the conflict disappeared.

5.3 Separating the Men from the Women

In this section, I am going to look at the participants' talk about men, explaining how they too were conceived as 'outsiders'. As Simpson highlighted, women have frequently inhabited 'token' positions within male dominated environments, but there is only fragmentary literature that explores the role of men in non-traditional workplaces (2004: 350). It is perhaps ironic, therefore, that due to the lack of male participants, findings within this thesis regarding the male experience of working in the industry were largely restricted to perceptions from the female grooms. How the women viewed male participation is still crucial, however, in gaining an understanding of the gendered aspects of the job role.

The participants discussed the characteristics of men in far greater depth than the way they discussed women. This could be reflective of what Hochschild calls the 'doctrine of feelings' (Hochschild, 1983) whereby men's emotional world is accorded a higher status than women's. It could also, however, be an indicator of the different way in which men were viewed in the riding schools. Simpson describes the 'special consideration' that men are given when in male dominated industries. She states that,

In addition, many men felt their token status acted in their favour by affording them special consideration in other, non-career oriented ways (the special consideration effect). For example, many men felt they were subject to different, and more relaxed, rules and expectations (2004: 357).

Males within the riding schools, therefore, could be subject to these two factors: their entire emotional world is accorded a higher status according to Hochschild's doctrine of feelings, and their 'token' status resulting in their being ascribed more focus and consideration. This was inherently related to the view, held by the participants that men were required to make a conscious effort in order to

overcome the perception that they were in an inappropriate environment. This was described by Karen as the “*stigma of riding*” that men had to confront, in order to be involved with horses,

I think if they're [men] good at it and they're quite tough then it's alright but, like, there are quite a few boys tend to take the mick out of boys who ride.

Abby supported this viewpoint and stated,

If you [a boy] go 'I go horse riding' to your friends, it's not very cool, but that's what I think it is, go playing with ponies is a girly thing, it always is.

Riding and being interested in horses was therefore closely associated with young women, or ‘girls’, and this association was perceived as forming a barrier through which men could not pass. Women were the dominant participants in the activity, and men’s participation was viewed as abnormal. This perception may be one explanation for the occupational segregation of the industry at the level of groom as there is a tendency towards the clustering of genders within occupations (Anker, 1998). Men in the industry were perceived as requiring ‘toughness’ in order to remain in the industry. This was similar to the ‘dedication and determination’ that was required of a groom in order to remain in an industry that was labour intensive and low-paid. Whilst women were not associated with the skills required for competing horses (as discussed in the previous chapter) men were not associated with the skills for being a groom. Men’s entry point into the industry, therefore, was restricted to the higher status levels, whereas women were held back from the higher status levels. This finding correlated with the findings from both Williams (1989) and Simpson (2004). Williams found that male nurses were often promoted over female nurses for their ‘leadership’ qualities, and Simpson found that men within female dominated workplaces were often ‘fast-tracked’ by management as she states,

Many men recognized that their minority status as men gave them career advantages (the career effect). These advantages were particularly evident

in teaching and nursing where men felt welcomed into the profession. In teaching, selection boards were perceived to look favourably on male applicants on the grounds that they were needed to provide a role model for the male pupils. Similarly, many nurses believed that men were moved rapidly up the hierarchy into management and some admitted they had been 'fast tracked' in this way. In addition, assumptions of careerism meant that men were given opportunities to acquire skills and expertise that may not be so forthcoming for female colleagues (2004: 356).

The difference between the above examples and experience of men in the horse industry was that men did not 'flourish' as grooms, nor were their careers advanced from groom to competition rider, or riding school owner. Men were perceived as only existing in the higher status occupational positions within the horse industry and were not present in the lower status positions.

So what constituted the 'stigma' that was associated with men's work in the horse industry and by whom was it generated? By looking at the female groom's talk on men's role in the industry one can define the elements that contributed towards this negativity and these included physicality, emotion management and remuneration.

5.3.1 Physicality

As highlighted in the previous chapters, the work of a groom was very physically orientated. A groom's day was spent mucking out stables, leading horses to and from the fields, changing water etc. The female grooms, however, stated that male grooms were unable to 'cope' with the amount of physical work involved. Abby explained to me that Knightly had once employed a man who had soon left because he thought it too cold. She added, as an afterthought, that a man's presence on the yard might have been useful as he could help with some of the more physically demanding tasks, such as moving hay bales. Abby was acknowledging a physical difference between the two sexes, whilst giving an example of a man who had to leave because of physical discomfort. Chloe also

referred to an assumed physical difference between the sexes and how this impacted upon the relationship between colleagues. She stated,

It's easier, I think, to work with women, on something like this [a riding school], because you're all of the same physical ability. And it's much easier to cooperate with a woman than it is with Paul because he's so 'no I'm a strong man, I can do it, and you can't because you're a weakling, because you're a woman'

Chloe presented women as being of equal strength and this resulted in it being discounted as an area of conflict and status negotiation. Having a man on the yard changed this existing equilibrium and Chloe portrayed Paul's referral to his greater physical strength as a way of challenging the status of the women. Again, the underlying assumption that men actually had greater physical strength was not challenged. Keith, the owner of Knightly, also did not challenge this assumption. He explained that there were more males in the racing industry because it was a "tough" physical environment. This implied that the riding school sector was not perceived by Keith as being physically demanding which, for Keith, explained the high proportion of female participants.

In spite of the underlying assumption that men were the physically stronger sex, the women still felt that the work of the groom was too physical for a man to endure. Thus endurance, therefore, was associated more with the characteristics of determination and dedication, than actual biology. If they remained within the industry the implication for a man is that, like women, they are prepared to do hard physical work in order to fulfil an emotional need to work with horses.

5.3.2 Emotional Management

Men were not associated with being required to carry out any emotional labour when working with the horses. Instead, they were perceived as being able to maintain an 'emotional distance' from the horses, which was perceived as a positive skill in terms of riding ability. This was contrary to the positive emotional relationship that the grooms were expected to demonstrate when interacting with,

or talking about, the horses: the groom's 'love' for the horse. It was also perceived as being different to the emotion work that a groom was expected to carry out when problems occurred during periods of horse interaction: a skilled groom was expected to remain calm and patient in the face of any problems. The female participants actually perceived a man's overall emotional landscape to be different from that of a woman's. Karen explained that,

they [men] don't get as emotionally involved with the horses as women tend to...I don't think there are more talented male riders, I think that men aren't so emotional as women in general and I say that's something that makes it easier for them to ride competitively.

Karen felt there were no more 'talented' male riders than female, but that the relative emotional paucity of men enabled them to be more successful in competitive riding. This enabled her to account for the clustering of women at the lower status levels and men at competition levels. Women had the emotional involvement with horses that enabled them to have 'talent' and form a relationship with the non-human animal, whereas male 'talent' focused on their relative lack of emotion which enabled them to succeed at competition. Therefore, whilst women had to engage in emotion work in order to remain calm when confronted with moments of crisis, men were perceived as requiring to complete no emotion work as they had no emotions towards the horses and no emotions to control.

Highlighting a 'lack' of emotions in men enabled the female participants to present an argument for men's success at the level of competition. This representation of men, however, was also applied to men's interactions with non-human animals other than horses. Men were perceived as more confident than women and, although this was viewed as a skill required for grooms, it was viewed as being a 'natural male skill' rather than a female skill. As Debby stated,

...it's just a natural thing that men have that I think women actually lack. You can be the most confident woman in the world, but I think that quite often it's just with the way you stand maybe, or the way you speak, in your

voice. I mean, I know it sounds silly, but I find it with our dogs at home. Our dogs are more likely to listen to a male voice than they are a female voice and I think it's just because they've got that domineering aspect maybe.

No matter how hard a woman may try to develop the skill of confidence, therefore, the perception will still exist that she does not have the 'natural' ability of men. Men's 'natural' confidence was also associated with risk-taking and success in at the competition level. Sarah explained that men tended to rise to these higher levels because *"there is more of that 'fear factor' and men tend to be able to rise to those challenges perhaps"*. This is contrary to the discussion on physical injury and riding skills in the previous chapter where the 'adrenaline rush' of riding and the risk of being injured were described by the female grooms as a positive element of the job. Men were somehow perceived as being less 'afraid', when the female grooms were already shown to be 'brave'.

Overall, men were perceived, by the female grooms, as having a sparser emotional landscape than women, and as having greater levels of confidence. These were seen as naturally occurring abilities as opposed to skills that had to be acquired. Women, in contrast had to develop the skills of emotional control and confidence. Their 'natural' abilities focused on mothering and caring. That which came naturally to women allowed them to work as a groom and that which came naturally to men allowed them to partake in riding competitions. Men's 'natural' abilities enabled them to access high status positions whilst women's 'natural' abilities enabling them to occupy low status positions. Women, therefore, did not have the confidence and emotional distance for high status competition riding, and men could not form the emotional bond with the horse that was required for the lower status groom. The two sexes were also judged by very different criteria for success. Female success equated to length of time spent in the industry which was demonstrative of their 'love' for the horse, whereas male success equated to competition riding. These findings are very similar to those presented by Simpson (2004). Simpson states that *"some [male] cabin crew distanced themselves from*

women by claiming special attributes such as the ability to keep a ‘cool head’ under pressure” (2004: 360). This is very similar to the groom’s presentation of men as being able to maintain emotional distance from the horses, enabling them to be more successful when competing. Maintaining emotional control, or carrying out emotion work when dealing with difficult situations was, highlighted as an important skill for a groom, but the grooms made a distinction between the two sexes in their ability to achieve this skill and, crucially, the elevated male skill above female. Another example of this can be demonstrated in Simpson’s discussion on the ‘authority effect’. She states that,

Nearly all men recognized that their status as men gave them greater authority than their female counterparts (the assumed authority effect). For example, male teachers were thought to be better at discipline and at handling difficult classes so that even student teachers on placement were called upon to sort out unruly children. Many teachers agreed that they commanded deference from older pupils, which they related to ‘being a man and being assertive and giving out signals’. They therefore experienced fewer discipline problems than some female staff. In a similar vein, both nurses and cabin crew were aware that they encountered less ‘hassle’ than female colleagues (2004: 357).

The ‘authority effect’ is also similar to Hochschild’s concept of a ‘status shield’ (1983), which she argued the female flight attendants lacked relative to male flight attendants. Hochschild explained that women were more likely to be subject to verbal abuse from customers as their overall status in society is lower.

Therefore, the phenomenon that occurs within both Simpson and Hochschild’s research is that all the participants have some recognition of a disparity of status between the two sexes, and that this is reflected in the way interactions take place between two parties: either the flight attendant and the customer, or the teacher and the child. The key difference between their findings, and those outlined in this thesis, is that the customer/child has been substituted for a horse. A horse is not

necessarily aware of the gender of the person that they are interacting with, yet the female grooms still adhere to gender roles and persist in believing that men possess more ‘authority’ or a ‘status shield’ when dealing with horses.

5.3.3 Low-Pay

Men were also perceived by the participants as being more motivated by financial rewards than women. Individuals explained that men would want to earn a higher wage than women, and that this related to men’s ‘historical position’ as the ‘breadwinner’. Karen stated that it was the “*tradition*” for men to earn the main wage within the household. Sarah referred to this model in terms of an “*ancient idea*”. Firstly, this demonstrated that the participants did not view their jobs as financially valuable. Secondly, the participants referred to the historical authenticity of the male breadwinner model despite the relatively recent development of, as well as current reduction in, this form of family structure (Grint, 2005). As Warren stated, however,

The prevalence of the male breadwinner might be diminishing but the ideology of the male breadwinner family retains a hold and impacts upon identity and expectations (2007: 320).

By referring to it as a ‘historical’ rather than a ‘natural’ concept the participants implicitly demonstrated a schism in the meanings they attached to the two gender’s roles. Whereas a women’s ‘need to care’ was perceived as natural, a man’s requirement to earn a wage was seen as structural. Women, therefore, were perceived as being outside of this structural reality and their motivations were perceived as biologically driven. This does not change the authenticity of men’s breadwinning role; it merely implies that authenticity has different meanings when applied to each sex. Authenticity for a woman refers to the ‘natural’ and authenticity for a man refers to the ‘traditional’. Ultimately, men’s role as breadwinner is still a significant form of caring, as they are providing, economically, for their family unit. This form of caring, however, was not perceived, by my

participants, as a biological imperative in the same way as women's forms of caring.

5.3.4 Homosexuality

Although men were most frequently associated with competition riding, participants did discuss men who had worked in the lower status, and female dominated, role of groom. This generated a large body of consistently derogatory talk regarding the sexuality of those male individuals. Simpson also recorded this phenomenon as occurring within the occupations of nursing and teaching. She states,

Anxiety [by men] was expressed around the 'stigma' (a term frequently used by interviewees), of the non-traditional career choice. This was associated mainly with implications of homosexuality and, particularly in the case of teaching, of sexual perversion (2004: 361).

In Simpson's research, it was the men who were concerned about the label of homosexuality. In this thesis, however, it was clear that the female grooms were equally aware of the existence of this label, and it was most definitely perceived as a negative way to describe a man.

Men who worked or competed with horses were perceived as being homosexual by default, as Beth stated, *"they've had a couple of blokes that were here before I started but they were all gay"*. Descriptions were not positive, with homosexuals referred to as *"queer"* and *"batty boys"*. Although there was recognition that some men in the industry were heterosexual, as Becky stated, *"some really queer boys that ride and then you get the straight ones"*, this was presented as almost a token gesture. A clear value judgment was placed upon the individuals who were perceived as homosexual. Abby told me that Knightly had a male riding instructor but that he was *"sort of gay, but I'm not 100%, but he's alright"*. Homosexuals were also perceived as not quite male. Beth commented, *"they were not men, they were gay"*. Sarah also ascribed the stereotypically female characteristic of 'bitchiness' to a homosexual colleague, and stated *"he was probably worse than a*

woman as far as bitchy or catty was concerned". Men working as grooms could therefore be perceived as homosexual, 'other than' male, and, contrary to a 'natural order' having the qualities (sometimes negative qualities) associated with women.

As shown above, participants described men as having different abilities to women, which enabled them to participate in higher status roles that would offer greater remuneration. The riding school, with its requirement for an emotional relationship with the horses, low wage and physical labour, was not perceived to be an environment within which men should be functioning. Therefore, the male individual, who rejected this model to work in the riding school, was perceived as rejecting the accepted stereotypical male role. They became, in the eyes of the females, less than male, and this resulted in the assumption of their homosexuality. This does not mean that the participants simply perceived male grooms to be 'pseudo-females'. On the contrary, alongside the assumption of homosexuality came an entirely novel form of occupational segregation. Participants at the fieldwork sites stated that there was clear stratification of homosexual employees across different parts of the horse industry. Becky told me that male polo riders were gay; Abby explained that event and dressage riders were homosexual whereas show jumpers and jockeys were heterosexually *"randy"*.

Paul, as the only male groom within my fieldwork sites, both affirmed his own heterosexuality and received affirmation from his female colleagues. He clearly felt that he was required to defend himself against potential assumptions of homosexuality. Abby highlighted that Paul was *"after"* Chloe and *"had a thing"* for one of the instructors. Becky also stated *"everyone knows Paul ain't gay, he's too much of a lady's man"*. She added that Paul did not *"care"* about what others may think and that *"he's always got women round him so he doesn't really [care]"*. When I asked Paul whether he felt outnumbered as he was surrounded by women, he stated that *"not really, it's okay if they're fit"*. Paul, like the men in Williams'

(1989) and Simpson's (2004) study, clearly emphasised his masculinity and the other grooms helped maintain that image.

6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided detailed examples that demonstrate a clear link between the skills that were perceived as a requirement for success within the horse industry and the status of the individuals. The concept of the 'ideal groom' and the ideal methods of skills acquisition were the 'toolbox' by which status was negotiated and defined and these concepts relied heavily on a gendered concept of emotion management.

Status was clearly initially defined in terms of length of service and employment position. This reflects the high value that is placed in prior experience, as opposed to formal qualifications, as highlighted in Chapter Five. Status was therefore internally defined by the industry and not defined by a traditionally 'masculine' framework of education. Conflict arose as a result of the negotiation work that took place when status was more ambiguous or when relative positions were in doubt. This was especially the case when those of relatively similar were forced to work together. In these instances the participants referred to the more abstract skills, such as teamwork and the ability to control one's emotions in spite of adversity. Grooms used the technique of physical distance to reduce the amount of negotiation around status that they had to engage in. They mainly worked independently, on their own yards and with their own horses. When this was disrupted, as in the example of Debby and Beth, then conflict was unavoidable and explosive. The physical distance, however, also served to hinder the development of personal friendships and the structures that would support individuals in the carrying out of their emotion work. It is questionable, therefore, whether the maintenance of physical distance, through the distribution of yards and horses, is beneficial. Although it may reduce conflict amongst those of similar status, it may also generate the need for that conflict by over-emphasising the value of emotion work and prevent the 'sharing of burdens' amongst the staff.

Those considered as 'outsiders' were in a position to be criticised for lacking the whole range of required skills. For women this was not a one way process as Fiona and Karen were not simply passive recipients of criticism, unblemished in their role. Both Fiona and Karen engaged in behaviours that were outside the scope of their status. Therefore, not only did the staff consider both Karen and Fiona to be 'outsiders' but they also considered themselves as such. Fiona referred to her external academic skills to try to elevate her status; this was also enabled with the support of Sheila. Fiona attempt at elevation was perceived negatively by the other participants as it called upon the framework of formal learning that was not valued highly within the industry. Karen utilised her position as the owner's daughter to attempt to apply a higher status to her other roles of groom, instructor or manager. Fiona and Karen were similar in terms of the opportunities they had for high status, high paid employment, outside of the riding school sector. This set them very much apart from the rest of the staff.

Men were also viewed as being 'outsiders' within the lower status occupations within the industry (grooming) and were perceived as very different from women. Those in the industry were presented as requiring 'determination' to succeed within an environment where their participation would be viewed negatively. Men's 'determination' did not differ greatly from that discussed in Chapter Six in terms of the problems that had to be surmounted (physicality, emotion management and low pay), but this was summed up in terms of a 'stigma' that those things generated as a result of their male gender. Men were perceived as having a different relationship to these three skill areas, than women. Although the 'ideal' groom was required to have determination to succeed, emotional control, confidence with the horses, and a certain amount of 'bravery', these were associated more strongly with men, than with women.

Discussions regarding physicality highlighted an underlying assumption that men were physically stronger than women. In spite of this, women accepted the work as part of the job, and even revelled in the more dangerous aspects of the job,

whereas men were presented as being unwilling to tolerate hard physical conditions. Additionally, one groom described an apprehension that a physically stronger male groom would disrupt the physical equality that was shared amongst the females.

Women were perceived as having a natural requirement to care and mother, whereas men were perceived as being able to maintain an emotional distance from the horses because they simply possessed fewer emotions. Women and men were therefore perceived as having different emotional landscapes. Although it was perceived as a natural ability of men to be in control of their emotions, this was due to their 'empty' emotional landscape. Women, however, had a 'full' emotional landscape which required skill to control. This difference was used as a justification for men's success at the higher status level of competition and women's lower status position as groom. In addition, men's participation in the role of competition rider was also justified by their 'natural' confidence. For men, confidence was the natural talent, and emotion was at once both absent and not required. For women, confidence was a required skill that had to be developed, and emotion was both natural and, during moments of conflict, had to be controlled. Therefore women were perceived as 'naturally' more suited for grooming, and men as 'naturally' more suited to competition. The horse, the focus of all this emotion work, remained an unspecified element in the groom's relationship. Although the grooms may have perceived gender differences in line with Simpson's (2004) concept of male authority, or Hochschild's (1983) concept of a status shield, the horse was, assumedly, unaware of the more general social status of the sexes. Whether horses *actually* respond differently to men and women is unknown.

Not only were skills and natural ability perceived as being clearly differentiated between the two sexes, but men were also seen within a structural and historical context, outside of which women remained. For the participants, the 'breadwinner' role was seen as helping generate the negativity around the idea of a man working

in the poorly paid role of groom. Although still a form of caring, seeking financial reward in order to care for a family unit was perceived by the participants as legitimate, and represents the continued existence of a traditional gendered ideology as outlined in Hochschild's 'Second Shift' (1989). Women were simply non-participants within this historical narrative of the breadwinner and were expected, by the males in this thesis, to eventually withdraw from the horse industry in order to care for children. It is perhaps as a result of their structural invisibility that women became valued for their 'natural' skills of mothering and caring. The value placed in these characteristics is also, however, a reflection of a woman's low status and their restricted access to the financial and educational resources of men (Hochschild, 1983).

Those men who did work in the industry at the level of grooms were overwhelmingly defined as homosexual. This was a direct result of the perception that male participation took place in a role that was defined by its 'naturally' female requirements and contrary to the 'traditional' male role. The role of groom had ultimately developed a feminine identity and any participants were presented as having female qualities (Williams, 1998; Woodfield, 2000). Men who joined the industry, therefore, were perceived to have these feminine qualities and the assumption was that they were homosexual. Paul, who was not categorised as homosexual, had his heterosexuality supported by the female grooms. It is very important to note, however, that he did not intend to remain within the industry, had only joined as an 'accident', and made these two facts very clear. Had Paul been intending to remain within the industry as a groom, the perceptions of his sexuality may have been different. Homosexuality was also perceived to be stratified across different sectors of the horse industry, and further research would be useful to ascertain any correlation between stratification and the 'feminine' qualities of the role.

In the concluding chapter of this thesis, I am going to discuss my overall findings. My analyses will be used to explain how my findings relate to, and advance,

broader sociological theory. The limitations of my research shall then be explored, and I will suggest clear areas of further research.

Chapter Eight: Discussion and Conclusion

1 Introduction

This section will pull together the main strands of my thesis and relate them back to my theoretical framework. It will not just be a summary of the thesis, but will be a development of my core ideas, stating the contributions that the thesis makes to existing theory, including suggestions for the horse industry and potential areas for further research.

The data for this thesis was gathered at two different sites for eight months over a period of three years. I chose to complete my fieldwork within riding schools as this would provide me with a range of individuals, including owners, grooms, instructors and other ancillary staff. As a prior employee within the horse industry I was able to understand the terminology within the setting, whilst my researcher training and the process of academic feedback prevented me from 'going native'. I began my fieldwork with the aim of making sense of why women dominated within the riding school environment, whilst remaining open to any findings that may present themselves through the course of my analyses. Therefore, data was subject to in-depth open coding, before my final analytical areas were focused upon. Methodologically, it would have been better had I not had two pregnancies whilst carrying out my fieldwork. These pregnancies prevented me from participating fully in the work of the grooms. If I were to carry out this, or similar, research again I would wish to be more proactive in the daily routine of the yards. Otherwise, I feel my fieldwork and analysis followed a methodical ethnographic route, and analyses were organised to a standard qualitative form.

2 Theoretical Contributions

This thesis began with an exploration of the literature that would frame my understanding of the research question. The literature review detailed three core

areas of theory: occupational segregation by sex, emotional labour, and the field of human-animal studies (HAS). This provided an understanding of the factors that could impact upon phenomena of women in the horse industry. In this following section I shall relate these core theoretical areas to my research findings, showing how this thesis contributes to each.

2.1 Occupational Segregation

Within the literature review, the history of occupational segregation was outlined, and the continued existence of gender differentiation within the workplace was highlighted (Crompton, 1990; Anker, 1998; Bradley, 1999; Woodfield, 2007; Connell, 2009). Occupational segregation by sex was a key phenomenon of the riding school environment. The staff were overwhelmingly female and other environments, such as colleges and other parts of the horse industry, were also perceived to be dominated by women. This segregation was contrary to the historical foundations of the horse industry, which appeared to exclude women (Cooper, 1965; Carr, 1976; Bradley, 1989; Caunce, 1991; Leyser, 1995; Roberts 1997; Richardson, 1998; Hyland, 1999) and which associated men with the care of large non-human animals (Crompton, 1997). The horse industry has undergone massive transformation within the last 100 years (Cooper, 1965; Freeman, 1988; Roberts, 1997); the horse is no longer put to work on farms, as transport, and in war, but now forms part of a 'hobby' industry worth millions. Over this period, the industry has become 'feminised' and although there is some evidence for the existence of vertical segregation, the numbers of women still vastly outnumber men. These findings alone highlight the socially constructed nature of work in terms of the feminisation of occupations. If the horse industry could, so quickly, transform from being 'masculinised' to 'feminised', it undermines the concept of 'innate' skills and abilities that can be attributed to a specific sex.

The literature review did, however, explore the 'innate' abilities that were perceived to be possessed by women and showed how these were related to their role within the home. Women, generally, were perceived as 'naturally caring and mothering'

(Crompton, 1997) and these stereotypes, once applied to a specific work role then, led to that role becoming feminised (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990) which resulted in future labour demand becoming gender specific (Crompton, 1997). The durability of these stereotypical characteristics within society appeared to be grounded in the continued domination of a 'traditional' segregation of tasks within the home (Anker, 1997; Grint, 2005; Warren, 2007), and the existence of the 'second shift' (Hochschild, 1989). Women were traditionally expected to remain at home and care for children; whilst men were traditionally expected to be the 'breadwinner' and this had an impact on how skill was ascribed to each gender (Philips and Taylor, 1980). This phenomenon caused women's career status and earnings to rise more slowly relative to their partners, which impacted upon the broader wage gap and position of women in the workplace. Whilst 'success' continues to be defined in a masculine context (in the workplace) women will continue to maintain a structurally inferior position (Hochschild, 1983). As Philips and Taylor (1980) argued, 'male' skills are valued in society whilst 'female' skills are not. Furthermore, whilst the traditional distribution of segregated tasks within the home still dominates, skills will continue to be attributed on lines of gender.

This perception of innate female ability was clearly observed within the riding schools and the ability to care and 'mother' the horses was considered invaluable. This skill was prioritised over all else, including human interrelations, and will be discussed further below.

A 'traditional' perspective regarding appropriate gender roles was highlighted by the male participants in my fieldwork, who expressed that women in the horse industry would eventually leave to have children. This was reflective of Hochschild's (1989) finding that men tended towards a 'traditional' understanding of gender roles. Of all the full-time grooms that worked at the riding schools, not one had their own children. One part-time groom had grown up children, and the receptionist at Knightly had school-aged children. Being pregnant was not consistent with working as a groom and one newly employed groom was

immediately sacked for being pregnant. Having children restricted participation in a job that commanded a large amount of time, physical energy and commanded only a limited wage. It was clear that someone in, for example, my circumstances (a mother of two young children) would not be able to maintain a job as a full-time groom. This was also partly due to the routine of the work which had no inbuilt flexibility, or redundancy, to ensure workloads were adequately shared on the days when one groom was sick. Each groom was constantly working at their limit. Employer provision of time off to care for sick children would not, therefore, have been forthcoming. Additionally, the wage paid to a staff groom, discounting the far lower student wage, would not be sufficient to support the care of children alone; a groom would have to rely on a partner's wage, if one was present. As a 'traditional' work environment, one that relies on a woman's skill of 'caring', grooming does not enable a female parent to also take on the majority of the 'second shift' and, at the same time, does not pay a high enough wage to become the 'breadwinning' income. This contrasts with societal expectations that mothers will take on the majority burden of the second shift (Hochschild, 1989). It is in this way, therefore, that female parents are precluded from working as a full-time groom. Additionally, Hochschild (1989) outlines an association between social class and the adherence to either a 'traditional' or 'egalitarian' perspective regarding male and female roles. This implies that social class may be a factor effecting groom's career choices and future opportunities. If both the high status employers (from a high social class) and low status female grooms (from a low social class) adhere to a traditional perspective then it is clear grooms will be limited in terms of career longevity. They will, ultimately, leave in order to fulfil the social role that is expected of them. This, in turn, severely limits their potential career progression opportunities. These factors ultimately impacted upon the age of the workforce, which was overwhelmingly young.

The literature review also explored how men's and women's experiences within the workplace were very different, depending on their own gender and the gender-typing of the work role (Woodfield, 2000; Simpson, 2004; Williams, 2004; Pullen

and Simpson, 2009). Men and women were subordinate to the sex-typing of the role they inhabited: if the role was feminised then both men and women became viewed as possessing female characteristics. If the role was masculinised, then the same process occurred. Therefore, women in male dominated occupations were found to be defending their femininity (Williams, 2004) and men in female dominated occupations defending their masculinity (Pullens and Simpson, 2009).

This thesis has demonstrated that a similar process of sex-typing occurs within the riding school environment. As highlighted above, although the care of horses was associated with women, the tasks involved in the actual job were stereotypically 'masculine'. Female grooms handled and manipulated large and dangerous non-human animals, occasionally getting injured and wearing their scars as badges of bravado. They frequently risked themselves by scrambling five metres up to the top of stacks of hay bales in order to send an individual bale tumbling to the ground. The female grooms did not care for their hair, and only one groom wore any makeup; they expected themselves to look dirty and smell 'horsey'. These were not female grooms who defended a traditional definition of 'femininity'. They were grooms who defended their status as 'horsey' where this was defined as a dedication to the horses in spite of physical hardship. This protected against incursion from 'non-horsey' outsiders, including those who were trained in a formal, college, context. The college groom was portrayed as naive and hyper-feminine; someone who expected the work of a groom to be 'glamorous'. The colleges produced grooms that were perceived as not wanting to 'get their hands dirty', who would not be able to 'cope' with the hard work, i.e. one which *did* conform to a specific stereotype of female abilities. Within the occupationally segregated environment of the riding school, therefore, grooms rejected the sex-typing of their work as hyper-feminine. This theorising reveals a far more complex construction of gender at work than previously revealed in my literature review.

The single male groom, by contrast, had to make little effort in order to conform to existing male gender stereotypes. Working in jeans, carrying out heavy lifting, and

taking risks with large non-human animals, all seemed to 'fit' into the stereotype of a male manual labourer. The male groom, however, was required to defend his masculinity and have his 'masculinity' defended for him (e.g. the handyman took him to fix fences, and the female grooms repeatedly highlighted that he was not homosexual).

The negativity surrounding college-based training and formal methods of learning not only served as a rejection of the notion of a glamorous and feminised horse industry; it also represented the rejection of the codification of the skills of grooms. This codification of horse knowledge, acquired within the context of a college-based yard, was a threat to the social selection of grooms based on alternative, and intangible, measurements of skill. This is consistent with the findings of Woodfield (2000) who argued that the professionalisation and codification of the computer industry threatened a reliance on the intangible skills that enabled the maintenance of a social selection of participants. Whilst Woodfield's ICT employees were protecting technical ability, however, the participants in this study were protecting a very different set of intangible skills. Ideally, a groom would have acquired their skills with horses through informal methods of learning, such as previous yard experience, or contact with horses, or through a familial link with horses (however tenuous). This prior experience positioned them as a pre-existing 'horsey' person, and enabled the employer to make the assumption that the groom would be able to work in the role in spite of the poor wages, physicality and risk of being injured. If a groom had no prior experience before entering the yard, they would be expected to pick up their work tasks by observing their colleagues. This correlates with Cassidy (2007) who found that grooms learnt skills through imitation and participation. Cassidy found that this lack of overt tuition was related to the idea that being a horseperson was somehow 'natural' and 'in the blood' (2002). The daily routine of the grooms would enable a neophyte to grasp the main tasks relatively quickly. According to my observations, however, grooms did not join the riding school with no prior experience or contact with horses, even if their experience was only through riding lessons, or a couple of week's working with

horses. Complete outsiders did not work as grooms or, as in the case of Fiona, were very quickly rejected by the other grooms and therefore eventually resigned.

Therefore, although these findings are consistent with the theoretical framework set out in Chapter Two regarding occupational segregation, it develops the understanding of how participation is further structured within an already segregated environment. It highlights that even within a feminised industry, simply being 'female' does not result in automatic inclusion but that selection also relied on fulfilling a criteria of 'horsiness', defined by specific experiences and skill. Being male, however, did result in exclusion. A groom had to be not just female, but a particular type of female that *was not* stereotypically 'feminine' and *was* considered adequately 'horsey'.

2.2 Emotional Labour

In contrast with a rejection of the traditionally feminine 'glamorous' ideal, the grooms accorded a very high priority to their emotional relationship with the horses. This relationship was prioritised over any relationship with work colleagues or clients: the horse was the central subject of the grooms' emotional labour. The grooms within this thesis carried out emotional labour as defined by Hochschild,

This [emotional] labour requires one to induce or suppress feeling on order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others – in this case, the sense of being cared for in a convivial and safe place (1983: 6-7).

Grooms were, quite clearly, managing their emotional states to produce a countenance that impacted upon the 'state of mind' of the horses. This ability was important, commercially, as it enabled the horses to continue to be cared for and prepared for riding lessons. Without emotional labour, the riding schools would not be able to function.

Grooms within the riding schools were required to demonstrate that they were 'dedicated and determined' to working with the horses and that they felt an

authentic 'love' for them. This perceived 'skill' of women was very closely associated with the concept of the 'natural'. Women were perceived as being naturally able to care and 'mother' the horses, and this was an 'innate' need which required to be fulfilled. The 'skill' of caring for horses took precedence over inter-human skills. Long-lasting friendships were not formed between grooms; there was no expectation for grooms to be 'good' at dealing with customers. On the contrary, they were almost expected to be social deficient around humans. Additionally, grooms complained about 'bitchiness' on the yard and I observed conflicts around status negotiations. Ultimately these status negotiations, expressed in terms of longevity of employment, employment status and methods of learning, were focused upon definitions of 'horsiness'. Which of the grooms could present themselves possessing the right amount, and quality, of 'horsey'?

The skills of dedication and determination were perceived very differently depending on whether they were applied to males or females within the horse industry. Women's dedication was perceived as being required for them to remain in spite of the hard physical work and the low-pay. The benefits women received for 'sticking with it' came in the form of the horses, upon which they could bequeath their love and 'caring instinct'. The grooms' 'love' for the horse was portrayed as the benefit they received for tolerating poor working conditions and low wages. It is important to highlight, therefore, that physicality at the riding school was used, by female grooms, in two very distinct ways: firstly, as a way of restricting access to 'non-horsey' females (as highlighted in the previous section) and secondly as a way of demonstrating an emotional commitment to the horse. In this sense, a traditionally 'masculine' skill, in the context of the riding school, has become 'feminised' and subservient to broader, overarching societal assumptions about gender.

Male 'dedication and determination' was perceived as being required both to overcome the poor working conditions and to succeed within the industry in spite of its requirement for a 'feminised' skill set. Working with horses was something that

required 'love' and the assumption was that men they did not experience this 'love'. Male grooms were therefore perceived as 'abnormal' as it implied that they experienced 'love' for the horse. This emotion was contrary to the traditional male gender characteristics outlined in the literature review. One reaction against the presence of men working as grooms was for them to be labelled as homosexual. Having an emotional response to the horse was therefore viewed as the domain of women or homosexuals, not heterosexual men. In this sense, traditional male gender roles were far more inflexible than traditional female gender roles: whilst the female grooms could adopt 'masculine' characteristics (physicality, risk taking), male grooms could not adopt 'feminine' characteristics without incurring sanctioning in the form of attacks upon their sexuality. I would argue that this is representative of current broader societal expectations regarding gender. Women, as the less powerful sex, have more flexibility around how they portray their gender than men. This is similar to Hochschild's theorising (1989) regarding the position of men and women in the workplace. She argued that men are more likely to hold a traditional viewpoint regarding gender work/domestic roles, and women are more likely to be progressive in their viewpoint. Of course, the greater flexibility gained by women is meaningless if others are still in a position to prevent them from moving into the more powerful positions. Hochschild's progressive women may *want* to share the second shift with their partners but, if their male partner earns the breadwinning wage, adopts a strategy of resistance, and is supported by a societal consensus regarding the 'traditional' male role, she will be unable to make this a reality. A similar situation occurred within the riding schools. No amount of flexibility regarding gender displays will enable female grooms to progress into higher status positions whilst society remains 'traditionally fixed' when conceiving of gender.

Whilst the traditional stereotypes regarding their emotional landscape meant that men were socially blocked from becoming grooms, it appeared to position them favourably for the higher status role of competition rider. Men, perceived as having an 'empty' emotional landscape, were also then perceived as having the emotional

control required to work with horses in competition. They were also considered to be 'braver' than women and more authoritative with the horses, a finding that echoed Hochschild's concept of a male 'status shield' (1983). This perception was contrary to the discussions the female grooms had regarding physical injury. When discussing the injuries they had acquired in the past, and the 'adrenaline rush' of working with large non-human animals, the grooms presented themselves as somewhat 'brave'. Yet, somehow, male braveness was still valued more highly than female braveness. This is also therefore reflective of Hochschild's 'doctrine of feelings' where men's feelings and emotions are valued more highly than women's. Therefore, no matter what the reality of the grooms' work actually is, they are perceived as not being suited for competition work simply because they are female. The rejection of overly 'feminised' representations of grooming, therefore, was a subtle understanding, on the part of the grooms, of this inherently inequitable situation.

Overall, the perceived requirement for an emotional relationship with the horse served to defend the work space from both the incursion of men and, as explored above, the incursion of those considered 'non-horsey'.

Perhaps the above system of inequality could be justified if the grooms themselves actually 'loved' the work that they did and, in reality, had no desire to progress into the higher status and higher paid roles that would afford them income and flexibility. Like Bolton and Boyd's (2003) re-conceiving of Hochschild's flight attendants, the grooms were not simply emotionally impotent individuals, generating, and transmuting emotion in order to be exploited by both commercial interest and more powerful males. Grooms certainly did have an emotional response towards the horses, but I have argued that this response is not as 'authentic' as one might assume.

The grooms had no need, or expectation, to 'love' their colleagues, the instructors, or clients. They did, however, have to convince themselves and others that they felt an 'authentic love' for the horses. When the 'love' for the horse was perceived

as being false, an individual's motivations were questioned, conflict arose and the individuals would almost certainly resign. This is similar to findings from Taylor (2004) regarding workers in a non-human animal sanctuary, who also had to actively demonstrate that they authentically 'cared' for the non-human animals, and that this was their motivation for seeking employment in the industry. Emotion work, therefore, was carried out consistently in terms of demonstrating, to all observers, that their own 'love for the horse' was real and authentic. A correct emotional display of this type represented the possession of a skill that could not be codified or formalised, enabling the grooms to view their work as something that was both skilled and valued.

The issues of occupational segregation and emotional labour are entwined. By exploring the daily routines and lives of the grooms, there is no denying that they were engaged in 'work', both physical and emotional. As Smith (1992) highlights with regards to nurses, 'being emotional' or emotion that is 'uncontrolled', is perceived as dangerous. The nurse's aim is to make the patient feel cared for within a safe environment. Therefore, learning how to do emotion work takes 'skill' that is *"over and above 'natural' caring qualities, and is different to love"* (Smith, 1992: 18). Exactly the same could be said for grooms working with horses. Being 'over-emotional', and consequently 'uncontrolled', is perceived as negative when interacting with the horses, as it can potentially lead to a literally dangerous situation: the excited and nervous groom transmitting their feelings to the horse. Emotion display when interacting with the horse can be differentiated from emotion talk, the expression of 'love' for the horse outside of its presence. To perform this emotion display takes 'skill'.

In this following section I shall compare the findings of James (1992) and Theodosius (1998), with my own thesis findings in order to develop a more structured framework of emotional labour, one which takes the horse into account.

In the literature review I introduced James's formula for care: "care = organisation + physical labour + emotional labour" (488: 1992). James made the distinction

between domestic and organisational care by focusing on the relationships between the individuals, the division of labour and the level of flexibility. She viewed domestic care as being based on close personal relationships, with a degree of flexibility on the timings of the 'tasks of care'. Organisational care, however, was structured, focused on treatment or illness, and relatively inflexible. Relationships between carers and the cared for did not have time to develop any real intimacy, and different tasks were completed by different people and in different areas. The work of the grooms at the riding schools demonstrated elements of both organisational and domestic care. Like organisational care the grooms worked to an inflexible routine: horses were fed, cleaned, ridden, and taken to the fields etc. at the same time every day. The routine was at the core of the groom's work. Additionally, there existed a division of labour within the riding schools: the teaching was mainly done by instructors, and the more technical tasks, such as clipping the horse's coat, or the giving of worming tablets, by the yard managers. The grooms' care did have similarities with domestic care, however. The treatment of illness was not the daily focus and the grooms themselves managed all the daily 'normal' care of the horses. Additionally, the grooms were encouraged to develop familiar and personal relationships with the horses; achieved by giving each groom a consistent set of horses to work with. The groom's role, therefore, was very similar to that of a female parent: cleaning the horse's room, getting him cleaned up and dressed for his day, sending him out to the 'school', preparing his food in his absence, cleaning his 'clothes', letting him have a play out in the fields, and ensuring the horse is 'happy'. The groom is the domestic carer within the organisational caring structure.

The second element of James' formula is 'physical labour'. As revealed throughout this thesis, the grooms engaged in a large amount of physical labour and it formed the basis of the daily routine. Like James' nurses, the physical tasks of the grooms' work, such as making up feeds, grooming, mucking out, cleaning tack etc., was perceived as the grooms' 'work'. James states that,

The sense of physical tasks as 'work' held advantages for the nurses as well as having the disadvantage of colluding with the view that nursing is unskilled labour (1992: 498).

The same could be argued for the work carried out by the grooms. The defining of physical tasks as the grooms' 'work' serves to disregard the importance of emotional labour and the skill that is required in order to interact with the horses. Only by interacting successfully with the horses, and therefore carrying out emotion work, can the grooms complete the majority of their physical tasks. The two are inextricable.

The final element of James' formula is 'emotional labour'. She states,

The labourer is expected to respond to another person in a way which is personal to both of them but like other aspects of care it develops from the social relations of carer and cared-for and is shaped by the labour process (1992: 500).

The emotional labour carried out by the grooms is also based on an intense, personal, as well as physical relationship. Yet, at the same time, there is a distinction between carer and cared-for: the grooms or the yard managers define the routine and the form in which the care is provided.

Overall, the work of the groom fits into James' definition of 'care'. They carry out emotion work, physical work, and are part of an organisation. Where grooms differ, however, is in the complexity of the relationship between themselves and the horses. Whilst on the one hand the yard routine is structured and inflexible, on the other the grooms are encouraged to develop personal relationships with the horses, and care for the vast majority of their range of needs. The groom is both domestic and organisational carer. This, I suggest, serves to further undermine the view that grooming is a skilled profession.

In this next section I will look at Theodosius's work to explore how grooming fits into her conception of emotional labour. Theodosius identified three types of

emotional labour: therapeutic emotional labour (TEL), instrumental emotional labour (IEL), and collegial emotional labour. I would argue that TEL with horses is a fundamental part of a groom's job, even though they are working with a non-human animal. Ultimately, an unhappy horse will not work well for the clients in the riding arena. The groom's role is to support the healthy, daily emotional state of the horse. Clearly, this could be viewed as anthropomorphising the horse, but I would argue it is incorrect to assume that the emotional states of humans are not experienced by other non-human animals. TEL is carried out by the grooms when they talk to the horses, when they groom them or stroke them, and when they spend time with them.

The second type of emotional labour identified by Theodosius is instrumental emotional labour (IEL). This, she defines as the emotion work that is done by the nurse in order to carry out medical interventions successfully. As Theodosius states, with regards to a trainee nurse,

Kate needs to find a way to carry out this procedure without the patient knowing that she has never done it before, because the patient needs to have confidence in his nurse (2008: 164).

The type of emotion work is clearly carried out by the grooms when they are interacting with the horses. Tasks such as grooming the horse, clipping the horse's coat, picking out hooves, and even simply riding and leading the horse, all require instrumental emotional labour. The groom needs to control their own potential fear, nervousness, or excitement, in order to remain calm and relaxed around the horse. It is this calm state that will give confidence to the horse that the groom is safe to be around, and safe to follow. The horse is therefore equivalent to the patient and the recipient of emotional work done by the groom. A difference between Theodosius's sample group and the grooms at the riding schools, however, is the level of training. Theodosius highlights that the ability to carry out IEL is taught to the student as part of their training (2008: 166). This is not done

within the riding schools; grooms were left to observe other grooms, copy, and basically 'figure it out' themselves.

One final point regarding the role of instrumental emotional labour in the riding school focuses on the role of the horse. Patient and horse both respond to the carrying out of emotional labour that is done on their behalf. The patient is induced to feel secure and relaxed during a medical procedure because of the emotion work done by the nurse; the horse is also induced to feel calm and relaxed during an 'abnormal' (abnormal in the sense that it would not take place in the wild) interaction with a human. Both horse and human are responding to the same framework of feeling rules; the horse is therefore participating fully in a human system of interaction. Furthermore, I would argue that as the horse is both 'gender blind' and 'status blind', i.e. if the patient was a horse their confidence in their doctor or nurse, whether male or female, would only be determined by the quality of their emotional labour.

The final element of emotional labour discussed by Theodosius is collegial emotional labour (CEL). This, she relates to the relationships nurses have with each other and within a multidisciplinary team (2008: 178). This form of emotional labour is more complex in terms of status and feeling rules and, as Theodosius states, can be used as a 'status marker' (2008: 182). CEL was carried out by the grooms and other members of staff, at the riding schools (although it was not the central form of emotional labour) and became evident when conflict occurred. As with the nurses, the grooms are also "*conduits through whom important information is presented, processed and passed on*" (2008: 178) and good CEL is therefore crucial to the successful 'care' of the horses. When an individual is unable to carry out collegial emotional labour, which can occur when they perceive their status in one way and those at the riding school perceive it in a different way, it can quickly result in the individual resigning as groom, as with Fiona at Sampson.

Overall, Theodosius presents a very clear outline for the three key elements of emotional labour and the work carried out by the grooms fits into this framework.

This highlights a theoretical understanding that non-human animals can be the subject of emotional labour, and can participate in a human framework of feeling rules. It is not anthropomorphic to state, therefore, that humans and horses are similar in their responses to emotional labour.

Additionally, it is clear that the groom's work fits into the concept of 'care' as it is normally applied to humans. James' formula of 'care = organisation + physical labour + emotional labour' (1992) can also be applied. This formula is, however, brought into question by the riding school setting as the groom's work contains elements of both organisational and domestic care. There is simply more of a 'personal' relationship with the horse, which is encouraged by giving the grooms responsibility for a set of horses, whose maintenance and care they are mainly responsible for. A stronger formula could possibly be, therefore: 'care = *organised* + physical labour + emotional labour'.

2.3 The Field of Human-Animal Studies

In the literature review, non-human animals were shown to be both present and proactive members of human society (Birke, Hockenhull, and Creighton, 2010). Not only do they play a part in terms of their domestication and position as pets (Franklin, 1999) but they are also subject to human cultural meaning. As specified above, emotion was a key element of a groom's relationship with the horses and not viewing the non-human animals as paramount, when working with them, could lead to a breakdown within the workplace (Taylor, 2004). Unlike Taylor's (2010) non-human animal sanctuary workers, who had to manage their emotional relationships on three fronts (fellow staff, customers, and non-human animals) the grooms studied in this thesis focused on their emotional relationships with the horses, which increased the pressure upon them to maintain correct emotion management.

The authenticity of emotion is a difficult thing to assess and, as Bolton and Boyd (2003) argued, those carrying out emotion work are not simply doing so for the commercial benefit of their employer. That is not to say that the employers at the

riding schools do not benefit from the emotional labour of the grooms, they clearly do. Grooms, like Badgett and Folbre's (1999) care workers and Black and Sharma's (2001) beauty therapists, derive some positive emotion from being around the horses. This positive emotion, however, was discussed more that it was observed. Its existence and the management of negative emotions, such as fear, must therefore be interrogated. Women are still perceived to possess 'natural' characteristics that cause them to possess an emotional landscape that contains the 'need' to care for others. Emotion, those "*private 'irrational', inner sensations*" (Bendelow and Williams, 1998: xv) are bound up in human concepts of the natural and authentic. Non-human animals, too, are representations of natural, authentic, biologically determined artefacts. The belief in women's natural and authentic love for those artefacts, such as horses, that are perceived as natural and authentic is representative of a theoretical paradox that remains within sociology. It is, however, the study of emotional labour that enables us to shine a light on the field human-animal studies. When applying Theodosius's (2008) concept of emotional labour to the riding school environment it becomes clear that authenticity of emotion is only part of a complex framework of emotional labour. The fear that grooms feel is similar to the apprehension Theodosius's trainee nurses felt when carrying out medical procedures for the first time (2008: 164). Grooms can be nervous around the horses, but this nervousness should not be perceived as a lack of 'love' for the horse. The relationship between the groom and the horse is not a dichotomous one, but rather one that is a representation of the differing forms of emotional labour, based on a definite positive feeling towards the horse or, at the very least, the idea of the horse.

This thesis therefore contributes to the field of human-animal studies in two ways. Firstly, it questions assumptions regarding the authenticity of emotion towards horses. It is only by a rejection of these assumptions that sociology can meaningfully confront the issue of occupational segregation and emotional labour within the non-human animal care industries. Secondly, this thesis explores the fundamental use of emotional labour within the non-human animal care industries.

This, in turn, highlights both the gendered assumptions that exist in the industry, as well as locating the horse as pro-active participants in a framework of feeling rules.

3 Industry Specific Contributions

In the final section of this conclusion, I shall look closer at the environment of the riding school and highlight the changes that I feel would enable riding schools to reduce their turnover, and have a better skilled and motivated workforce.

The riding schools in this thesis were complex areas within which a variety of behaviours and negotiations took place. Different individuals occupied different spaces: grooms could be found in the darkest depths of the stable blocks, the hay barn and the farthest reaches of the fields; instructors mainly worked between the stables and the arenas; the receptionist rarely ventured far from her office; and clients negotiated all these sites, moving from reception to stable to arena without entering those more private spaces occupied by the grooms. The fields always remained 'insider' territory, and the arena always a 'client' space, no matter whether it was occupied by paying customers or grooms participating in staff lessons. The grooms within the riding schools had very physically demanding and tough jobs. Like Nusser's grooms (2004), their own wellbeing always came second to that of the horse's, whose needs had to be attended to before the grooms could rest.

At the first riding school, the grooms were employed and paid just above the minimum wage, but had no support or encouragement in terms of training. Additionally, two staff were remunerated 'off the books' for their work; one in cash and the other with accommodation and the use of the horses. This echoes the finding by Lantra (a sector skills agency for the land-based and environmental industries in the U.K.), who found that 64% of employees who took part in their survey did not have a written contract of employment (2011). At the second riding school the majority of grooms were classed as 'students' and were therefore paid a reduced 'bursary'. The students were then offered the opportunity to progress

through their British Horse Society (BHS) qualifications. A number of grooms also boarded their own horses at the riding school or, as in one case, was loaned a riding school horse. Their boarding fees were reduced relative to the livery clients. This meant that grooms would have to pay a financial penalty if they wished to either move their horses to a new yard, or quit their jobs. With their already low wages, this was something the grooms were inclined to avoid. Grooms who own horses are in lower income bracket than many other horse owners. Grooming, therefore, is a way for individuals from potentially lower class backgrounds to participate in horse ownership. I shall discuss this further below.

Both riding schools engaged in the formal horse-specific qualifications systems in different ways. Whilst the first school gained an income from the selling of BHS courses to clients, the second school reduced their costs by offering to subsidise BHS training for their grooms. Due to the high expected turnover within the riding schools it seems that offering training in return for a reduced wage was commercially sensible: grooms were likely to leave before progressing through their BHS qualifications. Additionally, the second riding school was not a BHS approved training centre, therefore they were not really qualified to progress an individual through their qualifications. In order to complete higher level BHS stage examinations, a rider would need experience on higher level horses, experience that would more likely be gained at a competition yard than a riding school. In reality, the riding school offering student positions was only really able to train to BHS stage two. Therefore, long-term employment and career development within the riding school was not an expectation, in spite of the finding that the majority of participants wished to remain in the horse industry. Lantra (2011) also found this to be the case as 62% of respondents, from their employee survey, stated that they wanted to remain in the horse industry for the rest of their career.

In terms of lessons for the riding school sector, it was clear that training issues and the negative attitudes towards codified knowledge and formal methods of learning were not beneficial to the employees. The employers in this thesis did stress their

belief that colleges were producing staff that were inappropriate for the industry. They questioned the wisdom in employing a groom who was theoretically strong and practically weak. As demonstrated in this thesis, a lack of practical skill should not prevent someone from being employed and, as highlighted by one of the grooms, many college graduates had practical experience obtained outside of the college-based yards. Colleges were, however, producing grooms with ambition and employers did not want grooms with this trait. Employers wanted to employ grooms who would happily muck out, work independently and get on with their set of horses. The college environment, therefore, was accused of producing staff who did not know what a 'real' commercial yard was like and whose expectations were set too high. This criticism, by employees, of the college environment was also highlighted by Lantra in their research (2011).

The findings from this thesis demonstrate that grooms were, normally, able to fulfil the practical tasks their job involved. Lantra found a similar situation, with 98% of businesses they surveyed stating that their current staff had the skill required to complete their jobs (2011). That is not to say that skills gaps do not exist and that training could not be improved.

The British Horse Society qualification system was very highly regarded by employers and it would make sense to engage in it more for the benefit of staff. The BHS system, however, relies entirely on examinations and this could be easily updated to include a form of continuous assessment for staff based on a commercial yard. Not everyone can perform 'on the day' and a mix of examination and assessment would seem the logical solution. Lantra also supports the very similar idea of 'apprenticeships', which would place students on a yard to be trained, and would have a legal clarification regarding training requirements that is more coherent than the current 'student' role (Lantra, 2011). It would also seem appropriate to suggest that commercial yards seek to actively encourage their staff through the BHS system, and college-based yards become more like commercial

yards. This could be achieved by making them more accessible to the public, in other words holding their own public lessons, taught by students at a reduced cost.

Grooms entering the industry need to know that there will be opportunities for them within the industry that go further than just fulfilling a 'need' or perceived requirement to 'love' the horse. When they begin working on a yard, training requirements should be evaluated, the training strategy detailed, opportunities for competing should be encouraged, and career progression plans should be outlined. Lantra found that 74% of employees currently did not have an annual review (2011). The implementation of these annual reviews for staff would bring training requirements into better focus for both staff and employees. Riding schools need to work at keeping their staff and this does not need to be achieved by paying a larger wage, but by giving grooms the opportunity to achieve something beyond being a "*sh*t shoveller*".

In terms of career development, it is clear there will always be a greater need for grooms than for yard managers or owners. Grooms who are actively encouraged to train, however, could easily take on more of the share of instructing. This could, potentially push contracted instructors out of the riding school and towards livery yards resulting in a two tier system of riding education. Lantra has found, however, that the ability to instruct has been highlighted as a skills deficit by employers within the horse industry (2011).

Currently, clients within riding schools appear to learn their skills at riding with no real aim. They learn the paces, and jumping, but the world of competition is still restricted to those who own and have the means to transport horses. Riding schools would benefit from encouraging their own clients (as well as staff) to compete on riding school horses. This would help solidify the link between training and national competition.

The riding school sector would benefit from improvements regarding 'family-friendly' policies. The perception that female grooms would simply leave grooming if they decided to have a child was reflected in the youth of the grooms, as well as

the negative reaction to the reality of a pregnant groom. Grooming and caring for children was seen as inconsistent. Riding schools could have better structures in place to deal with grooming absences related to childcare issues, and flexibility to fit with a childcare routine. Exactly how this is to be achieved is a discussion that needs to take place within the horse riding school sector. It is clear, however, that a more family-friendly workplace environment would help to reduce turnover and would enable grooms to remain in the industry longer. This, in turn, would increase their overall skills and help develop the industry as a whole.

The concept of teamwork within the riding school needs to be approached more thoroughly. Although working with a specific group of horses enables the groom to feel that they are forming a 'bond' with their horses, it can be isolating and can generate conflict. Grooms are unable to share their burdens in terms of the emotion work they have to carry out. Discussions regarding 'fear' or injury become statements of bravado and genuine discomfort felt by the grooms was only revealed to me within the confidential context of the interview. This lack of burden sharing is damaging as 'fear' then becomes the 'elephant in the room' that no one is capable of discussing. The idealised relationship with the horse then becomes the expectation and anyone who fails to achieve this relationship is deemed a failure. In order for this to change the idealisation of horses needs to be dismantled and human teams must be allowed to form on the yards. Additionally, the horse industry needs to practically recognise the importance of emotional labour within the workplace. This could be achieved in the following ways. Firstly, a system of mentors for trainees/apprentices could be introduced within larger riding schools. As stated by Smith (1992) this would not necessarily be a supervisor, but someone who has more experience, or who has worked in the industry for a longer period. This mentor would be a confidential advisor for the student, who would be able to guide them in their interactions with the horses. Secondly, the process of training a groom to complete tasks with or around the horse needs to take into account the fundamental role of, what Theodosius (2008) defines as, 'instrumental emotional labour'. The control of emotion when dealing

with the horse is largely taken for granted within the riding schools; its priority as a 'key skill' for grooms is undermined. As Theodosius states with regards to nurses,

Like their clinical skills, their emotional skills need to develop over time. By its very nature therefore, emotional labour in nursing challenges the professions [sic] image by questioning that nurses are born to nurse and are inherently good communicators (2008: 197).

The horse industry cannot continue to adhere to the myth that 'good horse people are born'. Anyone, with time, practice, and adequate training, can become a good horse person and an excellent groom. In order for this to happen, the emotional labour that is carried out by the groom needs to be recognised as a key component of their work. It is my understanding that these changes, including the formalisation of training and support that focuses on emotional labour, will have a positive impact upon turnover within the riding school sector.

4 Areas for Further Research

There are many areas and themes that I believe are worthy of further interrogation within the horse industry and the field of human and animal studies. Firstly, it is clearly important that my findings regarding the emotional labour that is carried out around non-human animals are replicated and therefore fully validated. I would suggest re-entering the field, perhaps within an alternative non-human animal care environment (for example, veterinary nursing), with the sole intention of collecting empirical data on the emotion work that is carried out between humans, and between humans and non-humans animals. This would further develop the connection between emotional labour, non-human animal care, and the construction of gender. It would then be very interesting to look at international differences.

Other social categories need also to be explored. This research focused on gender and, as previously highlighted, the categories of class and race have been ruled as 'out of the scope'. Age, however, was a key demographic category: the

majority of the grooms were young and still lived at home with their parents. It is data regarding the class of their families, therefore, that would need to be collected in order to do a proper social analysis of this category. The implication, from this thesis, is that grooms were of a lower social class, and worked as grooms in order to have contact with the horses that they would not be able to afford otherwise. Some of the grooms owned, or leased horses from the riding schools and were only able to afford to keep them because they received reduced boarding fees. Is it the case that those women who are interested in horses, and are of a high social class (and have more disposable income) own and board their horses without having to work with horses? If this is the case then emotional labour, with regards to non-human animals, could potentially be an issue of gender that crosses all social classes. Overall, it would be valuable to explore the occupational segregation of the grooms in terms of race and class and further research would be able to develop a theoretical framework to explore these issues.

Quantitative data on the horse industry, although recently improved by Lantra's 2011 study, is lacking and it would be very useful to have more coherent systems in place for collecting data on participation numbers and their further breakdown. Although I observed occupational segregation by sex, I was only able to access limited data regarding the wider situation including vertical segregation. Relying upon the perception of participants alone is not valid. Data regarding vertical segregation would also be valuable in developing a class analysis of the riding school sector. Additional data collection could also ascertain accurate levels of turnover. I observed a number of grooms resign at both fieldwork sites, and participants perceived turnover to be high throughout the horse industry, but this finding would benefit from a statistical basis.

Lastly, the issue of sexuality deserves to be interrogated more closely, especially in terms of both vertical and horizontal occupational segregation. Individuals within this thesis implied that different sectors of the horse industry display different levels of participation from individuals not defining as heterosexual. Is it true that male

dressage riders are more likely to identify as homosexual, or that show jumpers are more likely to be overtly heterosexual? It would be fascinating to explore this issue in closer detail, and relate it to the framework of occupational segregation, emotional labour, and the field of human-animal studies as presented within this thesis.

To conclude, it is clear that women dominate the horse industry, in spite of both their historical disassociation with horses, and the somewhat 'masculine' physical content of their work role. Their domination is due to the continued social construction of a traditional representation of women as having certain characteristics that predispose them to 'caring', as well as structural inequalities that result in women occupying the lower status and lower paid jobs. Grooming thrives on the conception that women feel 'authentic love' for their horses, obtained through experience within the correct 'horsey' background. Those who do not fit these criteria, men included, are shunned as outsiders to grooming. Men's structurally more powerful positions are justified with reference to their possession of traditional, gender appropriate, characteristics. This system of occupational segregation is recreated and maintained on the yards through the presentation of what is considered to be a 'skilled' groom.

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Appendices

1 Appendix A: Consent Form

I am a researcher from the University of Sussex carrying out research into employment in the horse industry. As part of my research I will be looking at who does different jobs with horses and why.

I will be based at your yard for two half-days a week over the course of the next few months. During that time I will be carrying out a small number of interviews as well as getting to know the staff. The interviews will be recorded on tape so that I can faithfully represent your views without having to rely on my memory. To get to know you all, I will be working with you, taking notes and chatting to you informally.

I will not be looking at how well you do your job, or assessing your skills with horses.

You have the right not to participate in this research. However, your participation will help me and others in the industry to understand issues that are relevant to us all.

All information that I collect over the course of this year is **CONFIDENTIAL**. Your identity will be protected; anything you say to me will **NOT** be shared with anyone at the yard. You have a choice about how I manage the information you give me. Information I gather and the results of my research will be shared with my department and with a wider research community. Results may also be published in the future. However, **NEITHER YOU NOR THE YARD WILL BE NAMED IN ANY OF MY DATA, OR FINDINGS**. You also have the right to access any data about yourself at any time.

I will be available throughout the course of my research to discuss any details and give you any further information.

You have the right to withdraw from this research at any time.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and agree with the above. By signing you also confirm that you agree to participate in my research and understand that this will entail being observed and participating in one tape-recorded interview over the course of the next few months, time and venue to be organised at your convenience.

2 Appendix B: Extract from Research Diary

Although I do not wish to analyse my own research diary, it makes clear how much I underestimated the amount of time it would take to complete the analyses of my data and the writing up of the thesis. Additionally, it highlights that having two children really turned this DPhil into a very different, far more labour intensive, experience. I look back on my writings from 2005 with a real sense of nostalgia, and feel I have come a very long way from that innocent, unknowing student.

January 2005 (second term of study)

I have to approach this subject as if it's all foreign whilst presenting a front to those I'm studying that I'm 'one of them'. I must go in assuming that I don't know whether there is any biological determinism in play or not. The subjects must start by letting me know what they think, then I analyse according to my theoretical training.

Gender is the open door - is there such a thing as the horsey girl? History says no, but people say yes? Where is the light in all of this?

I am thinking more about the class issue, having read the Cassidy book. I'm not sure how important class is in comparison with Cassidy's connectedness. Above I say that I always associated 'horsiness' with class. Maybe that's not sure, I associated it with history. I had no great history of horses in my family, indeed I have told many horsey people that my grandfather rode in the army. This is comparable to being my only claim to fame, my only connection to the history of this society. Perhaps when I come to select case studies, I should take this history into account - choose an old and a new riding school and see how gender is recreated in these settings. Woodfield looks at the how experience of a setting is subject to gender. This is going to be the case in the riding school. She looks at the problem in terms of theories on whether women will increasingly play a part in the industry. Women already play a part in the horse industry. What I need to do is outline how their roles have changed alongside the changes in the industry.

Underneath all this is the possibility that gender stereotypes develop contrary to history. This means there is no biological determinism.

What changed? The role/job or the gender stereotype? It's difficult to argue that the role has changed. Horses haven't really changed, just the purposes we put them to. But the groom's role hasn't really changed. Training hasn't really changed. Our concept of what the horse is, has that changed? Something that needs love, care, like a child? This would allow women to fulfill the role without changing the stereotype.

January 2005

Okay, So I have recently discovered that I only have five weeks in which to complete my research outline and I feel as at sea as I did last October.

I realise that I need to be really focused by now and I'm not sure where my focus lies! I have a sense of bereavement when thinking about all the areas I won't get a chance to research. arg!!!

I want to buy a Dictaphone so I can take down ideas and not lose them in the mists of my forgetful brain! I think I am moving towards the gendered identity, and knowledge and conflict. The two are interrelated, but how??

Something that comes back to me is Woodfield and her notion of the vagueness of a skill making it exclusive.

April 2005

My research outline has been completed, submitted and it has been approved by Paula [my supervisor at that time] and by the department. Now it just needs to go for approval at the graduate school and I can officially go start my research.

I feel as if I have been treading water since January. I took an easy course last term (although now I am panicking because the essay is due in next Monday). But

I don't feel my knowledge of the subject area has improved much more. However, my RO has allowed me to become a lot more focused.

Strangely enough though, my research is about to take a turn, as four weeks ago I found out I was pregnant - planned but not expected so soon! My treading water feeling has increased and increased as I am struggling to come up with an alternative plan. My concern is that I will not be able to get access whilst pregnant!

So today, I was wondering whether to split my research a bit. I could start a short section of fieldwork this summer at somewhere like XXXX. Fairly intensive but more of a trial run. Then, in October I could go part-time, concentrate on writing up the research. Then after the baby is three months, (Feb) I could look at starting full fieldwork. It would lengthen my DPhil a bit, but I can still submit after a min of three years I think.

May 2005

Have spoken to Paula about the pregnancy and changes, and have submitted reviewed research outline etc. Am now working on the introduction letter to the settings. A pain, I feel like a sales person and the letter is too long, it won't fit onto one page. I think this is the hardest stage so far, access negotiation. What if everyone refuses me?! I have decided to split my research as per above. I should submit a draft in October 2008, which isn't too bad

September 2005

Well you can tell I've been busy as I haven't added to this for a while - very naughty. So now I'm nearly 7 months pregnant, due on the 21st November and as you can imagine the baby is taking up most of my brain time. However, I have been very busy indeed since the middle of June. Basically, at the end of June I started fieldwork at a riding school down near XXX. I did a total of 12 days of observation and completed 9 interviews. This has given me a bulk of data which I am very proud of and at the same time very scared of. Now I have to turn the data into analyses!

The fieldwork went very well, a lot less stressful that I would have imagined. The people were all really very nice and helpful and I feel I saw a lot which is relevant to my thesis. So the fieldwork finished at the beginning of August and between then and last week I spent nearly every day working on writing up field notes and transcribing interviews. The transcription of interviews in particular has been a very long and boring process with each interview taking between 2 and 3 days. I have bought a digital audio recorder which was able to be downloaded onto the computer and played through windows media player. This proved very useful for transcribing and much higher quality than my analogue recorder.

So now I have a bulk of data as I said, and have to start coding and analysis. I certainly feel a bit overwhelmed by the prospect. My plan is to have something recognisable as research findings by the time the baby has been born. Then I can spend some time with the baby and writing up methods and other chapters. I hope to begin a further stage of fieldwork next year, when the baby is at least 3 months old (so March, April time). I am not sure whether I need to complete a whole year of further fieldwork in the next stage as outlined in my research proposal. Having completed this section of fieldwork I know I will need longer time, but only enough to include what I feel I missed in this fieldwork - i.e. second interviews and contact with instructors and teaching. Therefore I think 6 months would probably do it at 1 day a week (preferably more!). This would allow a settling in time (4 weeks), interviews (4 weeks), analysis and slight withdrawal (10 weeks), further interviews and observations (6 weeks) - so 24 weeks. So a completion of fieldwork time at next October.

So my tasks before next March are to write up this fieldwork and sort out further fieldwork. Oh and have a baby!

February 2008

I have finished my stage 1 fieldwork, had [my child], completed my stage 2 fieldwork and had [my second child]. Now I'm at the stage where all I need to do is write the thesis! I can't believe I've made it this far. Who would have thought that

you could do a DPhil and raise two babies at the same time? Once I finish this I will be a very proud woman. Now all I have to do is finish it.

So, I need to get the remainder of my interviews transcribed from stage 2. Before I had [my second child] I had started writing the data chapter from stage 1. So I need to complete that and the data chapter from stage 2. Then we'll move onto the other chapters. I'm hoping to transfer to continuation status ASAP. Then I can just get on with writing in my own time. Hopefully it will all be written by the end of the year. The plan is to graduate in 2009.

3 Appendix C: Example of a Day's Field Notes

Met lots of other people today. I met the yard manager who is also an instructor. I think she's called XXX. I apparently am very allergic to hay! Arrived at 1.30pm. Everyone was around the tack room and the feed room. I was introduced, by the lass from Monday (XXX), to the yard manager and another woman called XXX. XXX is a student. Also someone called XXX. Also the other woman who does the rescue ponies and who was there on Monday. My first task was to sort the muck heap out with XXX. She asked me what I was doing. I briefly stated that I was doing a research project with the University of Sussex. She told me that she was an engineer with a degree in physics and something to do with space. She also has a Master's degree. She explained that she has just come back from XXX where she was living. They had been working in the UK but his company relocated him to XXX. She ended up working as a volunteer at a hippo-therapy centre, which she really enjoyed. They split up and she came back to the UK. She stated she wanted to do something meaningful and enjoyable. She wanted to wake up on a Monday morning and enjoy going to work. So she applied for a job here. She also applied to work with the XXX, but didn't get it because of lack of experience. XXX is 34. She is living XXX way with family. She is now a student earning £70 a week and working towards her BHS exams. She got back from XXX in July and started working in August. She wants to study and go through her BHS exams quickly. She thinks she is very capable of studying quickly. She enquired to some colleges but she was unimpressed. She said she left a message at XXX inquiring about their 18-week course, but she was shocked that nobody contacted her. She commented that she was pretty shocked at the lack of management and organisational skills at 'riding schools'. She has done what a lot of people have done which is worked in a 'proper job' and has left it for the 'labour of love'. I don't know what she thinks of the hard work of the job, and the mundane tasks. She commented that she thinks she can progress quickly through her exams and I think she will get frustrated if her training does progress at an acceptable pace. However, she did mention that experience is valuable in terms of training and

learning about horses. She told me the students have an hour's training every day and that is in the form of either study or riding lesson. She said there's plenty of opportunity to ride. All of them bar me and another person went for a quick ride this afternoon. She said her friends thought she was crazy jacking in a high paid job for this and she had told them she saw it as retraining.

4 Appendix D: Observation Schedule

<i>Number of staff</i>	<i>Ages</i>	<i>Gender</i>
<i>Race</i>	<i>Clothing and appearance</i>	<i>Who does what tasks?</i>
<i>Status of work tasks</i>	<i>Power structures</i>	<i>Cliques</i>
<i>Interactions between male and female</i>	<i>Construction and maintenance of gender</i>	<i>Presentation of gender</i>
<i>Ascription of gendered characteristics to others/non-human animals</i>	<i>References to skills</i>	<i>Gendering of skills</i>
<i>Evidence of conflict</i>	<i>Sanctioning and conflict, re: gender</i>	<i>Motivations for working in the industry</i>
<i>References to industry as whole</i>	<i>Job satisfaction</i>	<i>Desire to move/progress within the industry</i>

Table one: observation schedule for fieldwork, in no order

5 Appendix E: Interview Schedule

What job do you do here and what does that involve?	<i>Prompts: employment status, full time/part time etc. How long have you worked here? Where did you work previously? What is a typical day? What are the enjoyable and not so enjoyable tasks?</i>
Training	<i>Prompts: How did you train for this job? Did you receive any formal training?</i>
Reasons for working in the industry	<i>Prompts: Why did you want to work with horses? Did you originally plan to work with horses? How did you end up working here?</i>
How were you recruited to this job?	<i>Prompts: Informal or formal processes and what were they? Step me through the process?</i>
Skills	<i>Prompts: What do you feel makes a good horse person? Do you think different skills are needed for different parts of the industry? How do you feel about college training in comparison to yard based training (is one of higher quality than the other)?</i>
Desire to move within the industry	<i>Prompts: Do you plan to stay in this area of the industry, or do you have any plans either to move within the</i>

	<i>industry or leave the industry altogether?</i>
How does your work here fit in with the rest of your life?	<i>Prompts: Any children, partners, do they support your desire to work in the industry? Can you afford to work here?</i>
Their perception of job status	<i>Prompts: How do you feel other people see your job?</i>
Clothes and appearance	<i>Prompts: Comparison of clothes in and out of work. Are there certain clothes that are suitable for this kind of work? What wouldn't you be seen dead in at work? Hair and nails, do you bother with them? Is there an expense involved in getting work clothes?</i>
Gender	<i>Prompts: Are you aware of any differences between men and women working in the industry? Have you worked with both men and women? Do you feel there are any differences between working with men and working with women?</i>
Sexuality	<i>Prompts: Are you aware of any issues of sexuality in the industry e.g. gay men working in dressage?</i>

Race	<i>Prompts: Are you aware of any issues of race in the industry? Do you know of any ethnic minorities working in the industry?</i>
Leisure – riding outside of work	<i>Prompts: Are you involved with horses outside of work – in what way?</i>
Job satisfaction	<i>Prompts: Overall, are you happy to be working here and in the horse industry? What don't you like about this job or working in this industry?</i>
Conflicts	<i>Prompts: Experience of any conflict, either in terms of skills, job tasks, with other staff, between job and other parts of life, job satisfaction, wages</i>
How they see the industry as a whole	<i>Prompts: What do you think about the state of the riding school industry? Have you heard any stories from other schools, either them doing well, or struggling? Why do you think the industry is in the state that it is?</i>

Table two: interview schedule for fieldwork

6 Appendix G: Initial Codes developed from 'Open Coding'

The Setting

Physical setting of the site

Demographics

Gender

Age

Class

Race

Clothing and appearance

Sexuality

How they got there

Reasons for being there

Emotional labour

Hard work

Pride

The Job

Work hours

Tasks

Daily routines

Skiving

Lunch break

Physical side of the job

Horse related injuries

Perceptions of the job

Perceived status of non-human animals

Teaching and Instructing

Workload

Negotiating, organising and sharing workload

Turnover of staff

Interactions

Skill and Training

Skills of the job

Sharing of skills/knowledge

Demonstrations of skills/knowledge

Skills with horses

Negotiation of skills/knowledge

Training of staff

Perceptions of training

Training versus workload

Experience versus qualifications

Intangible versus tangible skills

Career progression

Instructing

Conflict and Complaints

Demonstration of conflicts

Complaints

Horse ownership

Amongst staff

Livery issues

Life off the Yard

Family

Relationships

Social life

The Riding School Industry

Pay

Safety

Claims culture

Future

Non horse-related codes

7 Appendix H: Initial Thoughts - 16th September 2005

I've finished my first stage of fieldwork and what are my initial thoughts in terms of the issues that have arisen? These below notes are only relevant to the fieldwork I have completed and are not to be taken as generalisations.

- *There is a mix of classes of people who are involved in horses*
- *Grooms tend to be lower classes*
- *Owners tend to be higher classes*
- *Women outnumber men in the site I was in*
- *Have been told there is vertical stratification with men being more prolific as competitors*
- *Training is viewed as being split between college based and yard based*
- *College based training is frowned on by those not engaged in it*
- *There is a stereotype of the horsey person which is class related*
- *The industry is perceived as being in serious trouble*
- *Insurance and business rates as perceived as a major threat*
- *Progression in the industry in terms of employment is confused*
- *Skills are seen to be based on temporal experience and are described as mainly intangible*
- *Those involved in the industry tend to come from some kind of horsey background although this is not exclusive*
- *There is certainly a perception of emotional labour*
- *Grooms tend to be young*
- *There are major physical demands on a groom which are not recognised in terms of employment benefits – remuneration, or employment rights*
- *A grooms job is seen as inflexible - thus not good in terms of balancing job and family like*
- *Instructors and receptionists are more likely to be able to have a family/work balance*

- *There is some recognition of homosexuality amongst men, but this subject was tricky in interview - perhaps people unwilling to discuss*
- *There is a perception of the female worker as being gossipy and bitchy*
- *Conflict is strongly related to skills and knowledge*

Major issues

- *Class*
- *Gender*
- *Skills, training and career progression*
- *The industry*
- *Knowledge and skills*
- *Conflict*

Some of these overlap – e.g. career progression and the industry/conflict and knowledge

8 Appendix I: Example of a Fully Summarised Interview

G1 explained to me her daily routine. She stated that she mucks out the horses; gives them hay; gives them water and brings in from the field the ones needed for lessons. She explained that she is responsible for 17 ponies.

G1 enjoys taking care of the ponies and looking after them when they're sick. She doesn't enjoy it when the ponies need to be put down. This usually happens for medical reasons. She also dislikes filling up the water troughs in the fields and believes she is the only person who knows how to do this.

G1 told me about her bad shoulder, which she feels has been caused by mucking out stables, pushing wheelbarrows and heavy lifting. However, G1 states that she can't imagine working inside and that she has to be outside. She explains that she has wanted to work with horses since she was 11yrs and that her grandparents used to talk about her being a jockey because she's so lightweight. G1 told me that she was scared of riding to begin with and that she still feels nervous about going fast and when a horse is out of control.

In terms of training, G1 went to agricultural college and did a 1 year course which was the NVQ1 horse care. After this she went to a show jumping livery yard where she stayed for 6 months. She explains that she didn't get on with the people and says the yard was "stuck up". G1 lived on site and told me how on a couple of occasions she would go home and turn up late the following day. She felt she was stuck in the middle of nowhere with no transport. G1 added that the yard had to be very clean, whereas at XXX it only has to be "really" clean when they were due an inspection. After she left this yard she worked with her family doing tiling.

G1 saw the job at XXX advertised in a local paper. When she replied to the advert she had an interview with XXX and was shown around yard. She states that she started a couple of days later.

When discussing her NVQ qualification, G1 explain that she did it instead of the BHS qualifications because she doesn't like being "put on the spot" in an examinations. Currently, G1 is studying towards her NVQ level 2. She explained that the course is free to her as it's funded by the government, but that she doesn't want to do any more as she hasn't enough time for it. G1 is annoyed at her NVQ assessor, who she feels doesn't keep track of the work that she does.

G1 owns a horse which is stabled at XXX. She did take her horse to another yard previously as she found that she was constantly "at work" with livery clients "chasing her" when she was supposed to be with her horse. She found she wasn't riding her horse because she just wanted to "get away" from XXX. However, she found she was being "nagged" by the staff at the other yard for not being to her horse on time. The yard people were taking her horse out to the field because G1 was late, and she had to re-catch her again. G1 feels XXX's facilities are better but also she had to pay more to have her horse at another yard. Ultimately she moved her horse back to XXX.

G1 states that she doesn't have many friends outside of XXX and that when she goes home, she just sleeps. G1 told me that she feels stuck at XXX and that she's never sick. She explained that even if she has a holiday she has to come to XXX to attend to her horse and then she ends up being asked to work. Because XXX was short staffed, G1 worked the previous Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

When discussing life outside of work, G1 told me that she does have a boyfriend, but that the relationship is not going well. She explained that she shares a debt with him and that it's being repaid from G1's account. So she feels she can't just split up with him as she would then be left with the entire debt. She also told me that her boyfriend tries to control her and who she talks to. G1 went on to say that her boyfriend's work colleagues think that she barely works. She adds that other people see the industry as "easy" and don't realize how much physical hard work it is.

G1 told me that she cannot afford to leave XXX as livery fees are discounted. In other words, if she left she would not be able to afford to keep her horse. However, she thinks she may be forced out of the industry by her injured shoulder.

In terms of her future, G1 does not want to become a head groom. She stated that she likes to “keep to myself and my ponies”. G1 also told me that she doesn’t want to teach, stating that she taught some lessons a few years ago but was put off as the children just “used to throw themselves off”. She stated “kids, I don’t do kids” and that even the increase in wage does not tempt her. She added that she “can’t deal with” adult lessons and that she “hides” from the adult pony camps.

G1 told me that livery owners like her because she makes their horse’s beds “a bit deeper”. She admits that she’s quite fussy about how her beds are laid and that she’ll go back over other people’s work when they do the ponies for her. She also ensures that no one touches her pony tack stating that she knows which tack fits which pony.

In terms of what it takes to be a good horse person, G1 thinks someone needs to be able to connect with the horses and that they have to be able to “bond” with the horses. She also thinks a person needs to know how to be safe around horses and how to teach the horses “manners” otherwise they will “walk all over you”. G1 told me that in a dressage yard a person needs to know how to ride properly and how to plait up a mane and bandage a horse’s legs.

G1 explained to me that yards can be quite different in that some are “snobby”, some are “quite laid back” and some are really “up themselves”. She states that this varies no matter what type of yard. However, she did state that polo yards are quite “uptight”; and that, by comparison, riding school horses are more relaxed.

We discussed work experience staff and G1 told me how they don’t tend to stay in the job for very long. She stated that some work at XXX because their parents have promised them a horse. However, G1 feels that it takes them a long time to muck out a stable and that they need too much management.

G1 told me that grooms have to buy their own work clothes and that riding clothes (jodhpurs) are expensive. She states that she would wear a uniform if XXX provided it. On examination days, G1 told me that the grooms have to be smart, but that she can't afford smart riding wear so just wears what she has. For riding, G1 stated that she wears jeans unless she is in a lesson with John when she'll wear jodhpurs. G1 told me that she patches damaged riding wear.

When discussing a groom's wage G1 stated that it is very hard to live off. G1 doesn't feel the horse industry will ever pay a good wage.

G1 stated that XXX has had a few men working as grooms but that they "never last". She gave an example of an Indian "guy" who left because he thought it was too cold. G1 thinks that boys are put off by the "bitchiness" of the girls. However, she does feel it would be "useful" to have a man on the yard to help with heavy lifting. G1 also feels the girls might scare them off because the girls flirt, explaining that XXX had been flirting with XXX and the farrier. G1 added that XXX was "after" XXX and also "had a thing" for one of the instructors. G1 also thinks women can be very "hormonal" and can "snap". G1 told me that XXX has a male riding instructor but that he is "sort of gay, but I'm not 100%, but he's alright".

G1 told me about a person on work experience from the college who was from an ethnic minority although she only said that he wore a "turbany thing" and that he didn't last long because he was unreliable. She stated that XXX had told him not to bother coming back in. G1 couldn't think of any other minorities but did mention "some girl from Lancaster that was a dirty old tart".

G1 feels there can be conflict with the owner's daughter and cited an occasion when XXX got to use the school lorry to take horses to a competition even though G1 had already booked it for another event. G1 doesn't like the fact XXX "moans" about lack of money and states that even when XXX is at XXX she comes back 1 weekend a month to "drive us all potty". G1 told me that XXX is "bitchy and 2-faced". She added that XXX can be really "chummyish" and then will "dump you".

G1 told me how she had had a conflict with the previous head groom, who had been “laying in” to her. G1 explained that she organised herself a factory job and during an argument with the head groom walked off the yard telling the XXX and XXX “you can stuff your job”, G1 stated that she took a couple of days off and organised to lend her horse to the school, but that she eventually came back. G1 stated that the head groom left 8 months later and that G1 watched her stealing horse feed on her last day. G1 told me that she thinks the yard is a lot more relaxed since the old head groom had left.

In terms of sickness, G1 stated that she hadn’t had a sick day in over a year. She explained that she has frequently worked whilst sick as XXX only pays statutory sick pay and she cannot afford to have time off. She also commented that she is going into hospital for an operation on her shoulder and that she is going to take the days as holiday.

9 Appendix J: Glossary of Terms

Arena: an enclosed area, with a man-made surface, in which a horse is ridden.

Bridle: an item of tack, made up of various straps, which encloses the horse's head and enables the rider to guide the horse via the reins.

British Horse Society (BHS): a U.K. equine charity. Also runs BHS examinations.

See: www.bhs.org.uk

Client lesson/staff lesson: a horse riding lesson that takes place in the arena and is led by an instructor. Clients pay for lessons, staff have them as part of their ongoing training.

Cross country arena: an area on grass with cross-country jumps, where riders are trained.

Examination days: days at the riding school where member of the public pay to take their BHS examinations. These are examined by BHS recognised examiners, and can only take place at BHS approved establishments.

Farrier: not a member of staff, the farrier comes into the riding school to attend to the horses' feet.

Feed room: an area within the riding school set aside for 'hard' feed (e.g. oats, molasses, chaff, pony nuts etc.) usually kept in tall bins.

Fields: the areas in which the horses are 'turned out' in order to graze and get some exercise. Riding schools will normally have multiple different fields in order to prevent undue wear on one single field. Therefore field use is rotated.

Groom: both a person responsible for the care of the horse on a day-to-day basis, and the act of brushing the horse in order to clean its coat.

Hay barn: an area within the riding school set aside for hay, straw, and sometimes wood shavings (for the stable bedding).

Hoof pick/picking out the horse's hooves: the act of picking up a horse's hoof and using a small metal hook type tool to clean dirt out from the underside of the horse's foot.

Horse industry: defined by Lantra as including livery yards, competition yards, horse trainers, riding and racing schools. Lantra found that the U.K. horse industry comprises of approximately 19,000 businesses (2011).

Jodhpurs: a type of trousers worn specifically for riding horses.

Livery horses: a horse that is owned (or sometimes leased) by an individual and boarded at the riding school (or at specific establishments called 'livery yards').

Muck heap: an area where the dirty bedding from the horses' stables is collected. Called a 'heap' because it is usually piled into a big mound.

Muckers: footwear, normally made from rubber, worn for the purpose of cleaning out stables.

Pony: a small horse.

Pony days: days at the riding school where the young clients spend the day learning about horses and riding.

Reins: the piece of leather (or rubber, and sometimes rope) that runs from the horse's bit (the metal piece inside the horse's mouth) to the riders hands.

Riding Instructor: a person who delivers lessons to clients, either in groups or on an individual basis. The riding instructors within the riding schools featured in this thesis were all qualified to BHS standards. This is not always the case, although unqualified instructors will compromise their establishment's insurance.

Riding school horses: horses used specifically for riding lessons, as opposed to others, such as competition horses.

Riding school sector: this sector makes up approximately 35% of the horse industry (Lantra, 2011).

Saddle: a piece of tack that is placed on the horse's back and upon which a rider sits.

Schooling: the act of training a horse.

Show jumping arena: an enclosed area where jumps are placed, and clients are trained.

Stage Exams: BHS qualifications. See http://www.bhs.org.uk/Training_and_Qualifications/BHS_Examinations_and_Qualifications.aspx for more information.

Stable: the small enclosed area where a horse is placed. In the stable they are fed and watered. The ground of the stable is normally covered in bedding (straw/wood shavings/paper/rubber matting etc).

Tack: the items placed on the horse such as bridle and saddle.

Training weekends: intensive training sessions for paying clients.

Yard: the entire area containing the stables and feed rooms.